



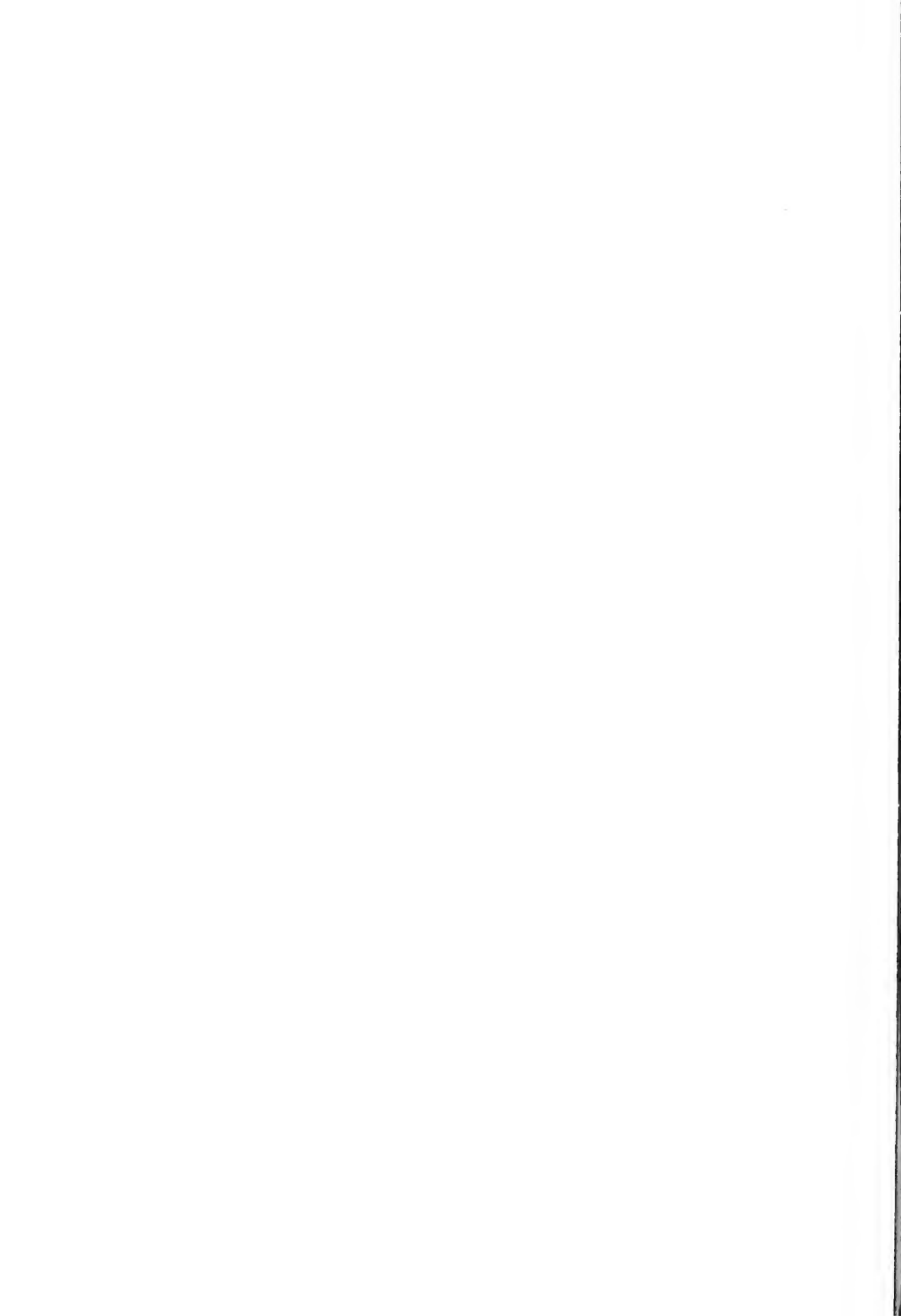
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No. 41

# The Drama









VICTORIAN EDITION

# The Drama

ITS HISTORY, LITERATURE  
AND INFLUENCE ON  
CIVILIZATION

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
ALFRED BATHES, M. A.  
CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND.

London  
The Athenian Society  
MCMIII



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v. 3.

*A HINDOO PRINCESS*

*After an original painting by S. J. Ferris.*

*Damayanti, forced to fly, reaches a hospitable city, where, though half naked and worn with toil and sorrow, she is adored for her beauty. Finally, she is discovered by a wandering Brahmin and returned to her home.*

SAKUNTALA BABAVUTI (HINDOO DRAMA).







# Oriental Drama

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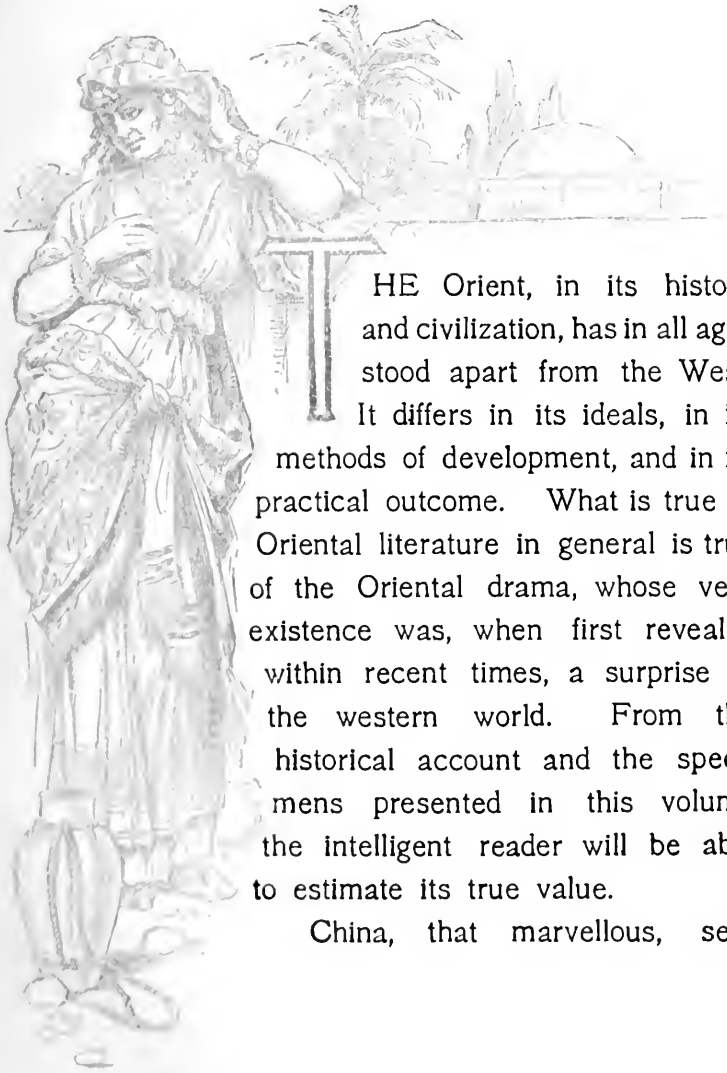
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## Prologue



THE Orient, in its history and civilization, has in all ages stood apart from the West. It differs in its ideals, in its methods of development, and in its practical outcome. What is true of Oriental literature in general is true of the Oriental drama, whose very existence was, when first revealed within recent times, a surprise to the western world. From the historical account and the specimens presented in this volume the intelligent reader will be able to estimate its true value.

China, that marvellous, self-

## PROLOGUE

contained, stagnant empire, claims hoary antiquity for all forms of its literature. The original pantomimes seem to have been celebrations of harvest, victory and peace. The flourishing age of dramatic production was from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries. "The Orphan of China," which the genius of Voltaire has rendered famous, and "The Magic Lute," which is extolled as a model of morality, belong to this age. Inculcation of virtue is enforced on the Chinese dramatist by the penal code of the Empire, yet the practice does not always conform to the precept.

Hindoo writers ascribe the invention of the drama to an inspired sage, and tell of dances and plays performed before the gods. Europeans first became aware of the excellence, and indeed of the existence, of the Sanskrit drama when Sir William Jones, in 1795, published his translation of the beautiful play of "Sakuntala, or the Lost Ring." This love idyll belongs to the first century, when Buddhism was still flourishing in its native land. Other plays of equal merit and of various dates down to the tenth century have since been discovered. Thereafter followed a

## PROLOGUE

period of decline in which Brahminism triumphed over its rival religion, and plays were written chiefly on the adventures of the heroes in the great epics or of the god Krishna.

The drama was brought into Japan from China; but there has long been a wide gulf between the literary drama and the popular. The former rather resembles the opera or oratorio, and is patronized only by the aristocratic classes. The favorite popular play is historical, the most famous being "The Loyal League." The actors, except in the ballet, are always men, and it is their ambition to excel in finale parts as well as others more natural.

Ancient Persia, intensely serious, solemn and dignified, had no drama. This Shiah sect, after ages of persecution, attained power in the twelfth century. Gradually the pilgrims to the tombs of the martyrs Ali, Hasan and Hussein developed memorial celebrations. For about a hundred years a religious drama has been yearly performed in Persia, which bears singular resemblance to the Passion-play of mediæval Europe. The popular comedy in the cities of Persia to-day seems to be an outgrowth from

## PROLOGUE

the recitations of the story-teller which have given us the "Arabian Nights' Entertainment."

This elevated table-land of Tibet, enshrouded in mysterious gloom, has, by the hardy enterprise of a recent traveler, afforded a glimpse of a singular dramatic development, which is there part and parcel of the Buddhist religion. The play has not yet been obtained.

The literature of the Semitic races—Hebrews and Arabians—shows no trace of the real drama, ancient or modern. Yet some critics class "The Book of Job" as one of the world's sublimest dramas, and others regard "The Song of Solomon" as a dramatic idyll.

Of all these varieties of Oriental drama this volume presents such specimens as seem of most genuine interest, historical or entertaining, for cultured readers.





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## **The Chinese Drama.**

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### **I.**

#### **The Chinese Drama.**

By the drama of the Chinese, far more than by their national annals, is illustrated the inner life of a nation containing more than 400,000,000 people, one that was far advanced in civilization long before Europe had begun to emerge from barbarism. In bulk, at least, the dramatic literature of China exceeds that of all other countries, the plays composed during a single dynasty filling about five hundred volumes. Thus it will be impossible here to present more than a general idea of the subject; nor could a comprehensive description be written or understood, except by those who are thoroughly familiar with the land where the scenes are laid.

#### **Origin and Development.**

As among other ancient nations, the Chinese drama was developed from the arts of dance and song. In some rude form it probably existed long before the Christian era, and, as tradition relates, is older even than that of the Greeks. Certain it is that the ballets and pantomimes, in which it had its origin, belong to a very

primitive antiquity, some of them having a symbolical reference, as to the harvest, to war and peace, and others to such important events as the conquest of China by Wou-Wang; but for the most part they are of humble theme, and often obscure in character.

According to some authorities, the modern drama, as the Chinese consider it, dates from the reign of the emperor Wan-Te, near the close of the sixth century after Christ; others assign it to the days of Heun-Tsung, in the closing decades of the eighth. Beginning with the latter date, the Chinese drama is divided into four distinct periods, each of them clearly marked by its own characteristics.

#### Periods.

First are the plays belonging to the Tang dynasty, from 720 to 907, dealing with the extraordinary events of an era of peace and prosperity, until interrupted by civil war. Next are those of the Sung dynasty, ending about 1120, treating of various subjects and introducing what became a standing peculiarity of the stage—a leading character who sings his part. Each division of the historic drama has a designation of its own. That of the Tang dynasty is called “The Music of the Pear Garden,” and that of the Sung dynasty “The Amusements of the Flowering Forest,” the latter holding the throne until they were succeeded by the present line of Mongol sovereigns. The five centuries included in the two former eras constitute what is known as the golden age, its dramatic productions being classed under the collective name of “The Joys of Assured Peace.”

But the most flourishing period was under the Kin and Yuen dynasties, between 1125 and 1367, from which our literary knowledge of the Chinese drama is chiefly derived, with a list of 85 authors producing nearly 600 plays, to say nothing of those which were composed by anonymous writers. A Jesuit missionary first made known to Europeans, in 1735, a tragedy whose title, rendered into English, signifies *The Little Orphan of the House of Tchao*, founded on an earlier piece which treats of the fortunes of an heir to the imperial throne. The latter was selected by Voltaire as the theme of a rhetorical play, in which he professes "to describe the manners of the Chinese and Tartars," but the subject is treated with little refinement or discrimination. Much better is the translation of Stanislas Julien, to whom, as to Bazin the elder and Sir J. F. Davis, we owe some excellent renditions of the Chinese drama. Of these the *Pi-Pa-Ki*, or *Story of the Magic Flute*, a domestic and sentimental play, has been usually regarded as the masterpiece of the Chinese theatre. In the more recent drama there is little to commend. "What do we find there?" says a critic, "farceical dialogue, a mass of scenes in which one fancies he hears the hubbub of the streets or the ignoble language of the highways, the extravagance of demons and spirits, intermingled with love intrigues repugnant to delicacy of manners."

In theory every Chinese drama should have a moral as well as a meaning, and this is provided for in the penal code of the empire; while he who writes immoral plays must expect, after death, a purgatory that shall

endure as long as they are acted. In practice, however, it is far otherwise; for, according to the critic already quoted, there is not one among the thousands of playwrights who is striving to benefit mankind by virtuous precepts and examples.

#### Classification.

While classifying their plays according to subjects, the Chinese make no distinction between tragedy and comedy. Religion occupies the foremost place; but the religious element often degenerates into mere buffoonery, creed conflicting with creed, and superstitions, whatever their origin, being received with welcome. The traditions and doctrines of Buddha are especially prominent, with exhortations to self-sacrifice and entire absorption in religious life. In historical drama, though a law forbids the introduction on the stage of emperors, empresses and the famous princes, ministers and generals of former ages, no such exceptions are made. Thus, in *The Sorrows of Han*, which deals with a national legend resembling the Biblical story of Esther, an emperor belonging to a fallen dynasty plays a sorry part. A large majority of plays, however, treat of domestic or criminal subjects. Their favorite virtue is filial piety, and their interest often lies in the vindication of persecuted innocence and the detection of long-hidden guilt. In such pieces he who is fond of the elaboration of agony, intensified and protracted to the utmost limit of human endurance, will find all that he desires. On the other hand, there is an occasional love-comedy, pure



and simple, but altogether too mild for our modern tastes; for in love-making, as in all their social intercourse, the Chinese have none of our elaboration, contrasting sharply in this respect with their political conditions.

### Personages.

In characters, as in themes, the Chinese drama knows few restrictions. Instead of depending on caste, as in Hindostan, rank is based on office, and this again on the results of examinations; so that the senior classman on the list of licentiates is the hero of society and of many a drama; nor is there any prouder boast than that one's ancestors have held high posts, which they owed to their literary successes. Yet the Chinese drama is no mere respecter of class, describing with remarkable freedom the virtues and vices of all grades and phases of society. The same license is used in dealing with either sex, female characters ranging from the heroine who sacrifices herself to save an empire, as in *The Sorrows of Han*, to the model of propriety who believes that "to unravel skeins of silk, to work with her needle and to be obedient" is the sole duty of woman. There is the well-behaved servant-maid, who arranges a rendezvous for a pair of sentimental lovers, and the reckless courtesan, who, after denouncing the partner of her guilt, bids him die with her, in the hope of being reunited after death. A broad distinction is made between the first and secondary wives, the latter of whom may be either courtesans or respectable women—according to Chinese ideas, which, perhaps, are not always clear respecting the

matter, and regarded by the legitimate spouse either with hatred and jealousy or with sisterly consideration.

### Length of Plays.

In the construction of the plot there is no little ingenuity, but with slight regard for the unities of time and place. The latter would, indeed, be impossible in plays that often cover long series of years and almost unlimited distances. There are usually four acts, sometimes with a prologue; but favorite pieces are extended to greater length, as is shown in the prologue to the *Pi-Pa-Ki*, where the manager states in the prologue that the play will be finished in a single day. For the performance of more recent dramas several days, or even weeks, are not infrequently required, especially those dealing with historic subjects. Of a certain monarch belonging to prehistoric times it is related that he reigned for several million years, and after his abdication lingered for a few hundred thousand years more, after which he was gathered to his fathers at a ripe old age. It would be no easy task to condense such a story into a four-act drama lasting for as many hours.

### Subjects.

The absence of all restriction permits the introduction of every variety of incident. Death by starvation, poison, drowning, execution, takes place in sight of the audience, as also do flogging and torture; miracles and other wonders are wrought, and magic brought into

play, while a father is visited by his daughter's ghost, which calls upon him to avenge her murder, and appears in person at the trial. Marriages are arranged by matrimonial agents, as is the custom in polite society, and at the end, when the knot is to be untied, this is accomplished, as a rule, by the interposition of official authority, thus affording a pretext for a glorification of the emperor like that of Louis XIV at the close of *Tartuffe*. Neither bill nor book of the play is required, the characters frequently announcing their names and genealogies, and recapitulating the previous course of the plot.

### Characteristics.

One of the peculiarities of Chinese drama is that the principal character of a play represents, also, its author, chanting the poetical passages, or those which contain maxims of wisdom and morality, with whatever is drawn from history or legend. These recitations, while serving to diversify the dialogue from which they arise, give to it its chief attraction, containing, as they do, metaphors in infinite variety and nicety of meaning. Thus there may be an infinite variety of phrases derived from the names of birds, beasts, colors, precious metals, etc., expressing ideas of rarity, beauty, distinction; and in these features is contained the literary element of their dramatic composition. For a reader unacquainted with the language it is, of course, impossible to appreciate the merits of such a phraseology. For the Chinese drama, in its present form—without denying its merits—cannot be claimed, in any high sense, the art of

poetry; of poetic ornament there is no lack, but there is not the spirit of lyric or epic verse.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that, in addition to ingenuity and variety of plot and character, there is much of pathos, with singular grace and delicacy of treatment, both in the conception and action of Chinese masterpieces. Such we have, for instance, in the *Pi-Pa-Ki*, where the husband of the deserted heroine, when in the presence of his second wife, attempts in vain to sing to his new lute, now that he has cast aside the old one. So at the close of the tragedy, where, after the death of his beloved, of which he is still unconscious, an emperor is represented as sitting in solitude, broken only by the ominous shriek of wild fowl. Nor are humorous characters wanting, as the lively Abigail, who persuades her mistress into confessing her love by arguing, like Beatrice, that "humanity bids us love men." A favorite theme is found in the humors of a competitive examination, and still more to the people's tastes is the character of the corrupt judge, falling on his knees before the parties to the suit. While such illustrations may not be over-plentiful, they are at least worth mentioning, if only as an answer to the supercilious criticism on a dramatic literature as to which we have few materials for forming a competent judgment.

#### *The Stage and Actors.*

There are few playhouses in China, permanent theatres existing only in two or three cities in the northern provinces. Elsewhere the stage is usually in a miserable





*A beautiful mountain nymph leads a good Emperor into regions of bliss or Elysium. The sun is represented by a man holding a golden disk; the moon by a player bearing a silver crescent; the thunder by another, carrying an axe to token a thunderbolt.*

*THE CHINESE DRAMA*

*After an original painting by F. R. Whiteside*



shanty or on a platform erected in the streets. Hence scenic decorations on any large scale are out of the question; but the costumes are remarkably rich, most of them such as were worn in the seventeenth century or before. The actor's profession is not in repute, most of the players being slaves purchased by managers and trained from childhood for the stage. Female parts are taken by lads and sometimes by eunuchs, not on moral grounds, but because an actress once became the concubine of an emperor. Notwithstanding its drawbacks, the Chinese theatre is always well attended, no matter how poor the play or how wretched the accommodations.

#### Outline of a Chinese Drama.

Occasionally there are dramas whose scene is entirely in Elysium, the actors being all of the angelic order. In one of them the sun is represented by a man holding a golden disk; the moon by a player in the costume of a woman, bearing a silver crescent; the thunder by another carrying an axe to betoken a thunderbolt, dashing around and committing many deeds of violence. The Shin-sien, or row of angels, circle round or cross the heavenly orbs and elements, mimicking the conjunctions and oppositions supposed to be maintained among the armies of heaven. A mountain nymph, grateful for some kindness she has received, introduces a good emperor into these regions of bliss, but he is not long there before, feeling some solicitude as to what is passing among his subjects in the lower world and fancying that there are grievances to be redressed among his

people, he condescends to revisit the earth and examine into the disorder of his State.

A wicked courtier, disguised as a tiger, appears on the stage and rushes into the secret apartment of the ladies, who scream with terror, while the tiger seizes the heir-apparent and drops him into a neighboring ditch. The ladies then hurry to the court of the emperor, fling themselves down in his presence and recount the terrible disaster which has befallen the young prince, and he is discovered to be the son of the mountain nymph who had been the guide of his father to the realms above.

The emperor is overcome with grief and determines to abdicate and renounce the world. He calls to his counsels a crafty woman, to discuss with her the nomination of a successor, and she recommends to his choice a half-witted youth, whom she expects to use as a puppet. The settlement of the crown is no sooner arranged than the emperor is carried aloft in the dragon chariot to the regions of the blessed. The poor fool is brought forward, dreadfully perplexed with the honors that surround him, and instead of rejoicing in his good fortune he cries out most piteously, "Oh, what shall I do!" The pathetic and the ludicrous are finely contrasted, until there comes to his help the wicked courtier, who has thrown off his tiger-skin, and has broken the heart of his sovereign by carrying away the heir to the throne. The traitor is appointed confidential minister, and involves the new emperor in inextricable embarrassments, anarchy at home and unfortunate wars abroad.

It would seem a fit termination to the drama that the heir should be restored and tranquillity reestablished, in-

stead of which a new series of events is introduced, and quarrels and negotiations with a foreign court are the subject-matter. Peace is to be restored by the surrender of an obnoxious counsellor, whose son-in-law is appointed to bear the accepted proposals to the court that is to be conciliated. He undertakes the mission expecting to obtain more favorable conditions for his relative from the offended prince, and in order to make his journey without exciting too much observation he returns home and disguises himself by a change of apparel. When he arrives at his destination he discovers that he has lost his letter of credentials, and recollects that he has left it in the garments which he had thrown off. He is denounced as an impostor and a spy, and with great difficulty escapes, wends his way homeward, rushes to his chamber, shakes garment after garment, but no letter is to be found. He throws himself into a chair, in the utmost agony; the servants gather around in sympathy, and he turns to a female slave, asking whether she knows anything about the missing letter. She tells him she had seen such a letter in the hands of her mistress, who is nursing her baby in a remote part of the stage. On hearing this he looks upon her with a smile of affection, approaches her, lays one hand on her shoulder, fondles the infant with the other, and she, with a look of love, surrenders the desired document. Thus peace is made and all ends happily; for with the Chinese, as with the Hindoo and other Oriental forms of drama, it is the custom to dismiss the audience in a happy frame of mind. The peoples of the far East do not carry their business cares with them into their

theatres or into their homes, and in this respect also we have something to learn.

### Voltaire's Chinese Play.

In the preface to his tragedy, *L'Orphelin de la Chine*, Voltaire makes some pertinent remarks on the connection between theatrical representation as in use among the Chinese for more than thirty centuries, and the general civilization of the people. He considers this tragedy a chef d'œuvre as compared with anything that France or Germany had produced at the time it was written; that is, the fourteenth century. He remarks that the Chinese play has all the fascination of the *Arabian Nights*; that the interest is kept alive however incredible the story may be, and that, in the midst of the entanglement of events, the purpose and the plot are steadily and constantly kept in view.

The piece opens with a fearful picture of the slaughter and desolation which have accompanied the invasion of the Chinese capital by Genghis Khan. He has murdered the whole of the imperial family, except the youthful heir to the throne. A virtuous mandarin and his beautiful wife determine to save the prince, whom the conqueror is trying to discover, in order to extirpate the last of the legitimate race. Finally he is traced to the mandarin's family, and they decide, in their distress, to sacrifice their own son as a substitute for the intended victim. But when he is led forth to be beheaded maternal tenderness overcomes every other feeling, the mother breaks in upon the place of execution, reveals

the imposture and reclaims her son. The officers stay the hand of the headsman in order to report the matter to the great Khan, who, as it seems, had been fascinated by the mother of the child in her earlier days, when young Genghis bore another name and before he had entered upon his career of victory. She is brought into his presence; his old passion bursts out anew; every menace that despotism can urge, including the threatened murder of her husband and son; every promise that sovereign power can suggest are used, in vain, to overcome her chastity. At last the piece closes with a declaration that the conqueror has been conquered—conquered by a woman's virtue.

### Translated Pieces.

The *Heir in Old Age* and *The Sorrows of Han*, both admirably translated by Sir John Davis, have long held a high place among the contributions of China to the dramatic literature of Europe. The last of these pieces has an historical interest, dating from a period anterior to the Christian era, and tradition reports the tomb of the heroine to be still preserved in everlasting verdure as the memorial of her virtues. The persons of the drama are Han, a conquering Tartar sovereign, and his envoys; Yuen, a Chinese emperor; Maou, his profligate minister; two officials, and the princess, Chao. Maou encourages all the licentious habits of his master, and recommends him to collect the portraits of all the handsome women of his empire, and to select for the palace the most beautiful among them. The minister patron-

izes ninety-nine, but, failing to extort a large bribe from the father of the loveliest of all, he disfigures the portrait and keeps the fair creature out of the emperor's sight. The monarch, dissatisfied with all the candidates for his favor, is wandering through the remoter apartments of the palace when he hears the sweet music of a lady's lute. He enters her chamber and is entranced by the lovely but still unknown damsel, who tells her tale and the perfidy which has led to the disfigurement of her portrait. The wicked minister is condemned to death, but he escapes to a Tartar camp, and takes with him the portrait of the divine Chao. On his suggestion the Khan insists on her being delivered to him, threatening to invade China unless she is surrendered by the emperor, who knows he is too weak to resist the Tartar, and that his resistance must lead to the overthrow of his dynasty and the desolation of his country.

After consulting with his counsellors, the emperor determines, though with great reluctance, to sacrifice Chao for the common good, and hands her over to Han. She is proclaimed the Tartar queen; she reaches the Amoor, the Black Dragon river, and, in the presence of Han, offers a libation, tells him she will wait for him in another world and flings herself into the stream. Peace is restored. Chao appears in a vision, but the "wild fowl" awakes him to report that it is only a dream. The head of the minister is made an offering to the shade of the princess, and her tomb is kept green in memory of her departure.

## II.

### Chinese Plays in English Dress.

However arbitrary the Chinese government may be from our American point of view, the playwright is permitted, as we have seen, to write on almost every subject, including many which an American public would never tolerate. It would, indeed, be impossible to enjoy greater freedom than was granted by the imperial authorities in this respect. Popular opinion does not, as with us, prove a stumbling-block to the author; he has to deal with a peculiar form of civilization, with a nation possessed of strong common sense, a fund of humor and a keen sense of satire, which atone, in a measure, for a defective education. Many of the subjects chosen do not, according to our western ideas, appear fitted for the stage, for they seem to be wanting in interest and passion. Yet this charge is only partial, for even Europeans, connected as they are by strong ties and a practically common civilization, hold divergent opinions as to what is strictly dramatic. Roughly speaking, the subjects come under eight heads; first, scenes from the history of the empire; second, filial and parental piety; third, the exaltation of learning; fourth,

native vices and peculiarities; fifth, those common to mankind; sixth, official corruption; seventh, legal anomalies; eighth, the absurdities of the religions professed in various parts of the land.

The historical plays are probably the best, but we should search them all in vain for the genuine reproduction of any memorable event, or for a better picture of the manners and customs of bygone ages than we have in pieces coming under other heads. The playwrights have sought to give historical characters a more private type—to represent them less as landmarks on the march of time than to show these inner shades of human nature which it is not the historian's task to depict.

#### *The Magic Lute.*

Filial and paternal love are, as a topic, unsuited, in our opinion, for dramatic elements, but, curious as it may appear, this has furnished an important part of the Chinese national repertory from the earliest times down to the present day. Filial duty, or piety, is more conspicuous throughout than paternal duty, enjoying greater importance by reason of the extensive authority the law affords a father over his offspring, and, as we would consider, his somewhat exaggerated notions of paternal rights and obligations. The following scene from the *Magic Lute*, first played in 1404, offers a vivid picture of the services imposed upon a son:

*Tsai-yong.*—(Sadly.) What is the world? (Sings.) I have studied everything; the works I have read would fill a thousand



books. But as for winning fame and honors, oh! I have never thought of that. It grieves me to behold my father and mother getting old. My heart breaks with grief, and to whom can I unburden it? But here comes my lord Chang.

*Chang.*—My worthy neighbors all look upon me as a staunch protector. Whatever happens, they run to me for advice. (Salutes Tsai-yong.)

*Tsai-yong.*—Ah! sir, my parents are too old; I cannot make up my mind to leave them.

*Chang.*—I understand, my friend, that your parents' advanced age and the loneliness in which they may find themselves concern you greatly, but you know that your father wishes you to honor your family ancestors. If you do not take advantage of springtide's beautiful days to set out, when will you go?

*Tsai-yong.*—You do not approve of my conduct, and——

*Chang.*—Well, well, here are your father and mother; speak to them of it.

*Mrs. Tsai.*—(Warmly.) My son, you must not take your wife away with you. Since her wedding two months since, Chao has grown terribly thin. If she lives with you during three years I foresee that, at the end of that time, the poor woman will be fit for burial.

*Chang.*—Ah, Mrs. Tsai, will you cause discord in your family? Will you set a man and his wife at variance?

*Tsai.*—(To his son.) My boy, the examinations are beginning. This is the season when the Son of Heaven summons all men of talent to the capital. Why will you not compete for higher honors, since you have passed the first examination?

*Tsai-yong.*—Father, deign to listen to me. I do not refuse to go; it is your old age and the dread of future troubles that keep me here. If I leave the house, tell me who will remain and feed and serve my parents.

*Chang.*—My good friends, this is what I think: you should exhort the young man to go to the capital.

*Mrs. Tsai.*—Do you not realize that I have not in my house seven sons or eight sons-in-law to wait upon me? I have but one son and you want him to abandon us!

*Tsai.*—(To his wife.) What words have you uttered, wife? If our son leaves us, to pass his literary examinations, shall we not one day possess a large number of servants?

*Mrs. Tsai.*—(Angrily.) Stupid old man! years have clouded your eyes and dulled your ears. You cannot make a step, or even move your legs. If an inundation comes, when you have forced your son to leave us, who will be here to assist you? You will die of hunger if you have no rice, or of cold if you have no clothes. Do you know that?

*Tsai.*—Hush, you do not understand those matters. When my son is a mandarin we shall have a different household altogether. He ought to be on the road to Peking already.

*Tsai-yong.*—My mother is right. I trust that my father will acknowledge that she—

*Tsai.*—That's it, that's it; she is right and I am wrong. (To Chang.) I know well enough what keeps him here.

*Chang.*—Say, since you happen to know.

*Tsai.*—The attractions of Chao have produced a deep impression upon him. He dreams of nothing but love and the sweets of the nuptial couch.

*Tsai-yong.*—Father, you think I have intentions which—

*Chang.*—(Smiles.) Ah! ah! young graduate (sings) you sigh after the indissoluble union of Youen and Yang (birds symbolical of conjugal love). Like the male phoenix, you are loath to part from the mate you love. I fear that, in your blindness you prefer the stupid instruction of Ngo to Pong's audacious flight (birds representing timidity and courage).

*Tsai.*—You think only of pleasure, and you do not hesitate to argue with your father.

*Tsai-yong.*—Heavens! I oppose my father! My parents, I would not presume to put obstacles in your way. I repeat that your great age, and nothing but that, keeps me here. If an inundation happens, what will people say but that your son was wanting in filial piety and that he abandoned his parents to go in quest of I know not what preferment. Then my father will be accused of rashness; everybody will say that he forced his only son to undertake a perilous journey. Really, the

longer I reflect over this matter, the more difficult it seems to obey your orders.

*Tsai.*—Following my instructions depends wholly upon yourself; but tell me what you understand by the word Heao (filial duty).

*Mrs. Tsai.*—What! you are over eighty years of age and you do not know what Heao consists of? Well, it is merely this; leading an old man about like a child.

*Tsai.*—Woman, what do you mean?

*Tsai-yong.*—I shall answer your question, father. A son's duty is, in all seasons, to provide the comforts of life for his parents. Each night he must prepare the couch on which they repose; each morning, at cock-crow, he must inquire in affectionate terms after their health; watch over them when they walk; honor those they honor, and love those they love. He must not leave the roof under which they dwell. This is how our ancestors defined filial obedience and practised it.

*Tsai.*—My son, these are Tseao-Seae (ordinary duties). There are, however, many degrees of filial piety, and you have not spoken of the higher ones.

*Mrs. Tsai.*—(Exasperated.) Imprudent man! you are yet living, and it is only when you are dead that our son can be called upon to fulfil his latest and greatest obligations. As to his journey, let it be no more heard of.

*Tsai.*—Listen to me, *Tsai-yong*. The first kind of filial love consists in serving your parents; the second, your sovereign; the third, in seeking to win honors. You must likewise keep your body un mutilated, and avoid everything calculated to destroy it. This is the first command imposed upon you; but to attain distinctions, to practise virtue, and to hand down to posterity a glorious name that will reflect credit upon your parents are the highest expression of filial duty. He who does not endeavor to obtain dignities is a bad son; he must struggle for them though his parents be old and poor. If you raise yourself by your talents to the rank of Kwan (Mandarin) and you transform our miserable habitation into a mansion you will have accomplished all your duties.

*Tsai-yong.*—I have, father, but one objection to make. Sup-

pose I leave you, who can tell whether I shall return with or without the palm of victory? If I fail, you will remark that I did not know how to serve my parents and my emperor. What a fearful responsibility!

*Chang*.—What fantastic ideas you have, young man! Though I am old, I remember hearing it said: "At fifteen, you must study; at thirty, you must act." The man who hides in his breast the pearls and precious stones he possesses and conceals his abilities, never loved his family. You have learning and erudition, my young friend, and you cannot fail to succeed.

*Mrs. Tsai*.—Enough, enough, Chang; you are not lacking in fine words to induce my son to go.

*Tsai*.—Come, come my son, follow my advice and prepare at once for your departure.

*Tsai-yong*.—Man lives a hundred years, my parents, but are so many days in store for you? Your son feels joy with a tinge of sadness. He prays that you may have long lives, and hopes that you will be like the peach-tree, Fantao, which blossomed after 3,000 years.

*Tsai*.—Feelings like thine, my son, spring from a heart filled with love toward us. But every man pledges himself at his birth to love his parents and to serve his prince; by doing both of these he wins fame.

*Tsai-yong*.—As you insist upon it, I shall start for the capital.

*Chang*.—Young graduate, let your parents' well-being cause you no anxiety. Go, and go soon. My house can hold five families, and if your parents are in distress I shall assist them.

*Tsai-yong*.—Thank you, Lord Chang, for your generous promises; they embolden me to leave my father and mother in your care. When, however, the day of prosperity dawns for me, will they not be stricken with age? Alas! I fear that if I return with embroidered garments my parents will not know me again.

*Tsai*.—You spoke just now of our isolation, my boy; but on the day that you become a Kwan, the three sorts of meats and the costly fare offered during the great sacrifices shall be

laid before me, from morning till night, on elegant dishes and in vases of fine porcelain. This is better than eating beans and drinking water. If you come back with honors I shall die, but my soul shall be proud, calm and happy.

*Mrs. Tsai.*—In the twinkling of an eye the pearl in my hand is taken from me. Go, my son, but if your parents die of cold and hunger, while you rise to be a Kwan, your honor will be tarnished.

This dialogue is very Chinese, but contains, also, many of those touches of nature which make the whole world kin. The characters of Tsai and his wife are well brought out, though with what strikes us as a shade of crudeness.

The glorification of learning is another theme upon which much good work has been done. Graduates often take a leading part in a play, and constant allusions are made to them. The love that makes a maiden's heart beat faster is inspired by her lover's intellectual attainments as often as by his physical advantages or his charm of manner, when he has any. The stage sometimes represents a library, discussions often take a literary turn, and the very atmosphere is, so to speak, impregnated with learning and competitive examinations. It can barely be otherwise in a country where both are constantly before the public gaze, and where they form so important a part of the government organization. Still, pedantry is unknown, or nearly so, and the style of language common to every-day life is employed in the drama. If certain extracts appear to gainsay this, we should bear in mind that the Chinese, in their ordinary

discourse, indulge in a wealth of metaphor altogether foreign to our customs.

It is difficult to say much of those productions whose interest hinges on some native failing or peculiarity. Owing to our limited acquaintance with China, no number of quotations could show us how far the play-writer's efforts at delineation have succeeded. With virtues and vices common to the human race the position is reversed. Avarice is always avarice, whatever be the social conditions around it. It is intensely human, and, therefore, unceasingly engrossing. Moreover, it is one of those topics that survive the changes of fashion and the destruction of empires.

### *The Miser.*

The piece, of which a brief sketch is subjoined, is celebrated under the title of *The Slave of the Treasures He Guards*, or, in other words, *The Miser*.

In the prologue we learn that Thou-yong purposes going up to Peking, where competitive examinations are to be held. His patrimony has been sadly lessened by his father's prodigality, and he is eager to obtain a certain post so as to make up for this loss of treasure. Accordingly, he buries the greater part of his money and sets forth, accompanied by his wife and son.

In the first act Luig, the god enthroned in the temple on the sacred mountain, deigns to tell us his name, qualities and genealogy. The gods, he declares, are not to be bribed by the wicked with gifts and incense. A scoundrel, Kou-jin by name, enters the temple daily,

worries him, and gives utterance to bitter complaints against deities and men; he bewails having to carry water and clay for masons as a means of living, and ends by cursing his lot. He cannot even afford to purchase a little incense, and he offers his god balls of earth instead! Oh, if Luig bestowed upon him riches he would maintain religious men, give alms plentifully, build pagodas, repair roads and bridges, and befriend the widow, the orphan and the infirm! Sleep overtakes him in the midst of making these fine promises. Luig appears to him in a dream and informs him that wealth is granted by none but the god of Happiness. That divinity, being summoned, forthwith puts Kou-jin to shame by reminding him that he was formerly possessed of affluence, but that nobody except himself benefited from it. Had he not been unjust to his parents and cruel to the poor? The rascal attempts to justify his past conduct. Finding his efforts successful, he goes a step further; he begs, and finally importunes, the god to make him a wealthy man. The latter yields and then vanishes. Chinese deities, who, by the way, generally behave like spoiled children or angry men, must be at some disadvantage when dealing with clever rogues, if we are to judge by the result of Kou-jin's impudent efforts.

When the second act begins we are in a sumptuous apartment, where Chin states that his master, Kou-jin, was once a servant employed in menial offices, and who found himself one day mysteriously possessed of considerable means. But the rich man has no son, and he has commissioned Chin to buy one for him. Here the

scene changes to the interior of a wine-shop, the keeper of which declares that he has in his cellars a hundred casks of wine, ninety of which are more like vinegar than anything else. A weary and road-stained traveller makes his appearance, followed by a woman and a boy. It is Thou-yong. He has failed in his examination and his buried treasure was robbed in his absence. Destitution stares him in the face. The wine-merchant, however, receives the wayfarers kindly and proposes selling the graduate's son to Kou-jin. After a consultation between his parents, and despite his entreaties, the child is entrusted to Chin. Kou-jin, meanwhile, is busy communicating many things about himself. He boasts that, since the gods have enriched him, he has built houses like palaces; that he owns vast tracts of fruitful land, numerous junks laden with goods; that his thousand and one speculations are always successful, and that he enjoys a full measure of the consideration which the possession of wealth confers. And he loves his money above everything else; his sole pleasure is to see it increase, and parting unnecessarily with a single farthing is almost as bitter as losing a limb. He is known to be an arch-miser, and he glories in the fact. Thou-yong's son pleases him and is purchased at once; but the unhappy father, who has confessed his penniless condition, is turned out of the house like a dog for hinting that immediate payment would be highly acceptable. He complains of the treatment and gets a sound beating for his pains. This moves Chin to pity; he promises the poor man assistance and dismisses him with the words: "Go away, my friend; his heart is hard and inhuman."



What follows is worthy of notice. The miser draws up with his clerk a document running in this wise: "The party binding himself by this deed is Thou-yong, the graduate, who, being without any means of living, wants to sell his son to a rich proprietor, the respected Kou-jin."

*Chin.*—Everybody knows that you are a man of fortune, and very wealthy. Why, therefore, write "rich proprietor?"

*Kou-jin.*—Do you want to teach me anything? Am I not a rich proprietor instead of being a beggar? Yes, yes, rich proprietor—rich proprietor. Put those words behind the deed. After the bargain has been struck, if one of the contracting parties fails to carry out the conditions stipulated here, he shall pay one thousand ounces of silver as a fine.

*Chin.*—I've written that; but, by-the-by, how much do you give the graduate for his son?

*Kou-jin.*—Don't trouble your head about that. I am so rich that I can never spend all my money, even if I shower it upon him.

(Thou-yong signs the paper, which the clerk brings back to his master, who asks him if the graduate has left.)

*Chin.*—How can he go away since you have not paid for his food?

*Kou-jin.*—You must have lost your senses! Having nothing to feed his son with, this man sells him to me, that he may live in my house and eat my rice. I am willing not to charge anything for food, but how dares this beggarly graduate to ask for more?

*Chin.*—He has no means of returning to his friends.

*Kou-jin.*—As he will not consider himself bound by the terms of the deed he signed, send him back his son and let him pay me a thousand ounces of silver as a fine.

(Chin, who is humane throughout, prevails upon his employer to give him an ounce of silver.)

*Kou-jin.*—You should not think so lightly of a silver ingot

on which is the word Pao (precious thing). Making this outlay appears a small matter to you, but it is like drawing a drop of blood from my veins.

The parents are naturally furious at such a paltry offer. "What!" exclaims the mother, "an ounce of silver! Why, a baked-earth child cannot be bought for that money!" When this remark is reported to Kou-jin he replies, with barefaced coolness, that a baked-earth child occasions no expense beyond that of buying it. "This fellow," he adds, "sells me his son because he is unable to feed him. I am willing to go so far as not to charge for what the urchin will cost me, but I will not consent to have my property wrested from me. You blockhead!" he cries, turning to Chin, "it was you who fostered such absurd pretensions. In what terms did you offer the ounce of silver?"

*Chin.*—I said to him: "The Youen-wae sends you an ounce."

*Kou-jin.*—That is the very reason for his refusing it! Now pay attention and obey my instructions. Take an ounce of silver, hold it up high, very high, and say to him with unction: "Hi, you beggarly graduate, His Excellency deigns to grant you this precious ounce of silver." Do you understand?

*Chin.*—I am holding it up as high as you like, but if can never be more than what it is. My lord, I beg of you to give him his due and dismiss him.

*Kou-jin.*—Well, then, not to hear anything more about this affair, I shall open my money-box and pay another ounce of silver, but no more, mind.

Thus ends the third act, and we must suppose an interval of some twenty years before the next one be-

gins. Here, again, Kou-jin is placed in a strongly satirical light. His adopted son is twenty-five years of age, and he himself is a widower, on his death-bed.

*Kou-jin.*—Oh, how ill I am! How wearily each day drags on for a suffering man! It is nigh upon twenty years that I bought this young madcap of a famished graduate, his father, who could not afford to keep him. I spend nothing on myself, no, not even a farthing, while he, heedless fool, is ignorant of the value of money. He considers money only a means of getting food and clothing; beyond that, it is worth, in his opinion, no more than mud. Can he imagine all the anguish it costs me to spend the tenth of an ounce?

*Adopted Son.*—Father, won't you eat something?

*Kou-jin.*—You are unaware, my son, of the fact that this sickness was caused by a fit of passion. One day, having taken a fancy to eat some roasted goose, I went to buy one. The dealer had just been roasting a duck from which came a most delicious gravy. Under pretence of bargaining the price of this bird, I took it in my hand and held it until my fingers were full of gravy. I returned home without buying it, and partook of a dish of rice cooked in water. After each spoonful I sucked one of my fingers. When I had eaten the fourth spoonful I fell asleep. Unfortunately, during my slumbers a thieving dog came and licked my fifth finger. On awakening and seeing what had taken place, I grew so furious that I fell ill. My condition grew worse every day; I am already a dead man. But come, I must forget my thrift a little—let me see, ah yes, I should like to eat some mashed beans.

*Adopted Son.*—I shall fetch you a hundred farthings' worth.

*Kou-jin.*—Nay, for a farthing; that will suffice.

*Adopted Son.*—For a farthing! That money will get you but a spoonful, and what dealer will sell me so little?

The young man goes out and spends ten farthings instead of one, for which he is soundly rated by the miser.

*Kou-jin.*—You took ten farthings just now and gave them to the bean-seller——

*Adopted Son.*—He owes me five farthings on the coin I gave him, and I shall ask him another day to return them.

*Kou-jin.*—Before giving him credit for that amount did you ask his name, and who his neighbors are?

*Adopted Son.*—Why inquire, father, about his neighbors?

*Kou-jin.*—If he removes without paying the money, where shall I go and claim it?—I feel that my end is near.

*Adopted Son.*—I must go to our temples and offer incense for your recovery. Give me some money for the purpose.

*Kou-jin.*—There is no need for that; burn no incense for the prolonging of my days.

*Adopted Son.*—But long ago I vowed to do that, and I cannot postpone the performing of my vow.

*Kou-jin.*—Ah! ah! you made a vow! Well, here is a farthing; go and burn your incense.

*Adopted Son.*—That is not enough.

*Kou-jin.*—Take two farthings, then.

*Adopted Son.*—That's not enough either, father.

*Kou-jin.*—Then I give you three farthings; that is enough— No, it is too much, too much, too much. My last hour is fast approaching, my son, and when I am no more, do not fail to claim the five farthings.

The vigor of this satire is apparent to all. Few of us have not seen characters of whom *Kou-jin* is a prototype. His part is in no way overdrawn, and his sordidness is well sustained to the end. It is instructive to place him side by side with Molière's *Avare*. The last act of the play is devoted to the fresh misfortune which overtakes the graduate, and concludes with the return of the adopted son to his natural parents.

The Chinese are eminently skeptical; they pin their

faith and respect chiefly upon a number of practices, many of which are not more than nominally religious. Filial love, for instance, is not closely associated in their minds with some high and invisible being. They accomplish their filial duties because custom and training have instilled into them a matter-of-fact veneration for their parents, and because such is a traditional habit among them.

When they perform the funeral rites they bring offerings to their gods, less an act of homage to them than as a mark of respect toward the memory of their relatives. We seldom, perhaps never, read of a parent telling a lad to do his duty because this is pleasing to his divinity, though we constantly read of his teaching obedience to what was ordered by the sages of old. Thus a rite is celebrated because it is prescribed by usage, while the deity to whom it is addressed sinks into the background. He is the part needed to make a whole, but that part is kept out of sight as much as possible.

A Chinaman can feel, therefore, little scruple in ridiculing those of his tenets which lend themselves to derision. In a land, too, where religions are so numerous and grotesque, and where public opinion and the government allow so much toleration, we may reasonably expect to hear of a large quantity of religious comedies. That the laziness and ignorance of a licentious priesthood should incur censure under these circumstances is not to be wondered at. Strange to say, religion and clergy have suffered little in consequence, and, what is more important, have not purified themselves. How a man can retain any particle of respect for a creed

which has been mercilessly lashed before millions of his countrymen is a problem which we shall not attempt to solve. Inquirers into this question may possibly discover that skepticism has much to do with this apparent anomaly. It will be sufficient here to lay before the reader the summary of a religious drama or tragedy, and another of a religious burlesque, or what at least has that appearance.

### A Religious Drama.

*The History of the Character Jin* shows how some dramatic authors under the present dynasty treat Buddhism, a faith which has more adepts than any other in Thibet and China proper—that is to say, among a mass of people comprising about four-fifths of the total population of the empire.

Leou is a miser and a money-lender, whose sordidness is the subject of the opening scenes. A fat, strong priest of Buddha, coming to ask for alms, he assembles his neighbors and bids them jeer at the beggar's corpulency, which they do pretty freely. "I must measure his stomach," observes Leou, sardonically, and he forthwith tries to proceed from words to action. The priest, however, stoutly resists him.

*Priest.*—Give me something to eat, and I shall teach you my doctrine.

*Leou.*—Where is your doctrine?

*Priest.*—Bring me paper, ink and a brush.

*Leou.*—I have no paper. (*Aside.*) A sheet of paper costs a farthing; that man makes ruinous demands.

*Priest.*—If you have no paper, bring me ink and a brush. I

can write my doctrine on the palm of my hand. Leou, give your hand.

*Leou.*—Here it is.

*Priest.*—(Writes.) I make known to you the doctrine of Fo.

*Leou.*—(Looks at his hand.) It is the character Jin (pau-  
sence).

*Priest.*—Say that it is a treasure you will always carry about with you. (Disappears.)

The miser, after vainly looking for the beggar, is convinced that a miracle has taken place. He makes useless efforts to efface the character from his hand, but it imprints itself on everything he touches. An individual who comes to claim money not due to him is struck, and finally killed by Leou. When the murdered man is raised from the ground, the character Jin is found on his breast, where the fatal blow had been dealt. At that moment the priest appears and exhorts the murderer to embrace Buddhism, which the latter refuses to do. He, however, retires into seclusion, leaving to his wife the management of his affairs. His conversion is only a matter of time, and unexpected domestic troubles accelerate it.

Mrs. Leou is of equivocal virtue, and her lord is warned of the fact; so one day he snatches up a knife against her, and suddenly perceives upon its blade the character of Jin. In an instant his arm is paralyzed and the steel falls from his grasp. The faithless spouse takes advantage of Leou's trouble to escape. The priest reappears, Leou embraces the Buddhist religion and goes into a monastery.

The second play is concerned with another religion very widely professed, one based on the tenets of Lao-tseu, and which teaches the doctrine of transmigration. With many writers a favorite theme is the transmigrated husband, who returns to ascertain how long his widow has worn her weeds. As a matter of course, he seldom has the satisfaction of seeing himself mourned long. The subject is distinctly comic, without containing much inherent profanity. The following is an outline of the drama, and its title is *The Transmigration of Yo-cheou*.

Yo-cheou is one of those judges who favor the rich, oppress the poor and serve the party that offers the largest bribe. He has amassed great wealth, but he professes to be in poverty, despite his high functions. The emperor has ordered an inquiry into the administration of justice in the province within Yo-cheou's jurisdiction, but the latter has a clerk who keeps the reports of proceedings and everything else in perfect order, so the wily magistrate is covered with honor, and is at liberty to continue his exactions.

Yo-cheou leaves his court and meets an aged hermit, Lue-tao, who exclaims, on seeing him, "Woe to Yo-cheou! His last hour is nigh!" A crowd gathers around the hermit and takes him for a lunatic. He is arrested by the judge, who returns home and falls sick. Yo-cheou's end gradually approaches, and his family assemble around his bedside. He sends for his brother, to whom he gives a few parting injunctions, and communicates his fears that the lady about to become a widow will not remain faithful to his memory. Both



the parties in question allay his anxiety, and he dies more or less happy.

The second act introduces us to one of the eighteen hells mentioned in the Tao. The king of Terrors summons demons and genii to his palace for the purpose of passing sentence upon Yo-cheou. If the art of scenic decoration were better understood, this picture would be terribly effective, for we have here the weird and yet gorgeous splendors of the infernal abode, the supposed power of its lord, and the extraordinary doings of devils and spirits added to the impression which everything connected with religion produces. As it is, the whole thing savors of a farce, because the meagreness of the decorations strips the scene of its majesty and provokes only scoffing and mirth. Yo-cheou is condemned to a miser's penalty—to pick up eternally small pieces of money from the bottom of a caldron full of burning oil. Luc-tao determines to intercede for the guilty judge and demands an audience of the king of Terrors, or, as he is called in some places, the king of Hell. It is granted without hesitation. The conventionalities and polite platitudes that obtain in civilized communities are also observed by the gods, if we are to credit what follows:

*King of Hell.*—Illustrious master, I should have gone to see you. My unpardonable want of civility confounds me.

*Luc-tao.*—An important matter brings me hither. What crime has Yo-cheou committed that you punish him thus?

*King of Hell.*—Are you aware that while this abominable man was on earth he traded in justice? And he was a miser; he shall go into the burning caldron.

*Luc-tao.*—Great King, emulate the virtues of the sovereign

Lord of Heaven, who loves to give life to all creatures. This Yo-cheou, however sordid he may have been, is none the less fitted for the priesthood, and he has declared himself my disciple. I beg of you to join his body and soul together and to let him return to earth.

*King of Hell.*—Please to wait a second while I look downward.

He looks down on the earth and learns that Yo-cheou's widow has just burned her husband's corpse. His regret at this occurrence is expressed in befitting terms.

*Lue-tao*—In that case what can be done?

*Yo-cheou.*—What infamy! What abominable cruelty! Ah, my wife, you were in a great hurry to be rid of my remains. Could you not have waited a day longer?

*Lue-tao.*—(To the King.) Have you the power, great monarch, to give him the body of another man if you see fit? Yes, I know you have, but will you be pleased to exercise your prerogative in this instance?

*King of Hell.*—So be it, Lue-tao, I can refuse you nothing.

He looks down once more to find out into whose body Yo-cheou's spirit can be sent. Le, a young butcher, died three days ago, and his corpse can receive the judge's soul. Only, he is dreadfully ugly.

*Lue-tao.*—I accept your offer with all my heart. (To Yo-cheou.) The transmigration of your soul will take place at once. As you well know, your body and soul cannot be reunited, as your widow has burned the former. But this must excite no vain regrets on your part. You shall go into the body of a butcher with blue eyes; but remember to keep your vows faithfully and do not forget my exhortations.

The third act is the most amusing. Le's family and neighbors have collected near his remains. When the rites are about to begin he amazes everyone present by sitting up in bed and staring at his mournful surroundings. His wife and children almost weep for joy. But Le, or, rather, Yo-cheou, who has already forgotten his adventures, is far from disposed to share in this loving outburst. "Hush!" he roars; "whoever saw such a scandal! What audacity! They come flocking into my very bed-chamber." He, of course, knows none of the persons surrounding him. "Le, do you know me, your wife, who loves you tenderly?" exclaims the widow. She wants to kiss him, but he pushes her back. "Turn all these mad people out," he shouts, "I'll have none of this. Away, all of you." He makes an effort to rise, but, ignoring that Le had a twisted leg, he hurts himself and falls back on the bed with a groan. A crutch is brought, and he straightway leaves the place to go in search of his own house.

In the next act he is scarcely able to recognize his former dwelling, for it was repaired after his death by order of the imperial censor, in memory of his long and loyal services as a magistrate. He knocks at his door, and his wife, who opens it, almost swoons with fright when she learns that he is Yo-cheou. Before she has time to recover he walks into the house, followed by Le's relatives. The butcher's wife claims her husband, while the revived corpse swears that he is Yo-cheou, the former judge, and receives a sound thrashing for seeking to pass under another name.

Finally all parties go before the censor. But this is

a case to puzzle a man even wiser than Solomon, seeing that Le is the plaintiff, Yo-cheou the defendant, and that both are the same individual. Fortunately, the old hermit appears at this juncture and reminds Yo-cheou of the vows he has already broken, whereupon the latter makes a virtue of necessity and takes refuge in a cloister.

It may be remarked that the unities of time, place and action are but little observed, even the three summaries which have passed before us showing to what extent they are sometimes set at naught.

A conspicuous difference between the European and Chinese dramas is explained by the fact that whereas in the former love holds a leading part in the latter it is relegated to a secondary place. In Europe love is a passion, in China a sentiment only; hence the thousand intrigues love gives rise to are, in the latter country, either thrown into the shade or tabooed entirely. Without their ardent passions many of our theatrical productions would lose their interest and most of their merit. An American or European play-goer requires a due quantum of love; in China, on the other hand, this demand finds little echo, since love there is not the chief theme of bard and painter. Convention and the strength of parental authority have crushed, in a great measure, those amorous longings which exist in the human heart; and as love, courtship and matrimony are more prosaic in the far East than in our part of the world, the first of these feelings, if handled as a passion, cannot powerfully arrest the attention of the multitude.

Side by side with this singularity is another not less striking, and that is the singing man. There is but one

in each piece, and he intones, as a portion of his rôle, verses intended to point out a reflection, an allusion to former events, the unusual aspect of a situation, or anything else upon which the author wishes to lay stress. He often interrupts the development of the action, but this not infrequently affords him an opportunity of putting the writer's inmost thoughts more forcibly before the spectator.

In the *Confronted Tunic*, as the title may be translated, a beggar, dying of cold and hunger, is befriended by a man who offers him shelter under his own roof. The outcast tells his woeful story to his benefactor and his son. The father, filled with compassion, exclaims: "Behold this unfortunate man! For him the wheel of fortune has not turned!" And then he adds, singing: "Who would believe that in this world there are many creatures so unhappy that they can hardly be taken for men?"

### A Soubrette's Intrigues.

In *A Soubrette's Intrigues*, Pay-meen-chong, a graduate, is in love with the fair Seao-man, whom he met in a garden. The maiden reciprocates his love and sends her attendant, Fan-sou, after him.

*Fan-sou*.—Sir, I salute you.

*Pay-meen-chong*.—Ah, so you are here, *Fan-sou*.

*Fan-sou*.—How do you find yourself?

*Pay-meen-chong*.—I am dying of shame! I am ill, and she has reduced me to this state. Do not wonder at it, *Fan-sou*. But what brings you here?

*Fan-sou*.—My mistress takes a great interest in you, and

she wishes to know if rest has made you feel better. (Sings.) She recommends to you, sir, warm potions and taking care of your noble person.

*Pay-meen-chong*.—Does she send me any other advice?

*Fan-sou*.—(Sings.) She desires you to study the King (a book so called) and the historians, and not to neglect literature.

*Pay-meen-chong*.—Does she send me also any counsels coming from her heart?

*Fan-sou*.—(Sings and lays a finger on Pay's mouth.) Take care to let no indiscreet word escape you.

*Pay-meen-chong*.—I am so ill that my soul is weary and my dreams are no longer peaceful.

We remember how Tsai-yong, in *The Magic Lute*, left home, at his father's request, to go to Peking. We now find that he has competed with success, and that the emperor loaded him with honors. But his triumph undermined his love for Chao, and when his sovereign offered him a wife from among the great families of the land he accepted her. Remorse, however, and a remnant of love for her whom he has forsaken leave him no peace. Neaou, his second wife, in the first flush of wedded bliss, perceives that anxiety of some kind clouds her husband's happiness, and her efforts to arrive at the truth have a womanly ring.

*Neaou*.—I heard just now the sound of your lute.

*Tsai-yong*.—Yes, wife, I play to calm my troubled mind.

*Neaou*.—I heard of your talents long ago, and everyone says that you are a proficient in music. How is it, then, that as soon as I come to listen you cease? I am glad to hearken to your playing, for your servant, too, has troubles. Sing me a song, I beg of you.

*Tsai-yong*.—Since you wish it I will do so; but say, what do you want me to sing? Would you like "The Pheasant that takes Flight in the Morning?"

*Neaou*.—Oh, no, it contains no love.

*Tsai-yong*.—You are wrong. Still, I shall sing "The Bird Louen Separated from the Mate it Loves?"

*Neaou*.—Why will you describe with your lute the sorrows of widowhood?

*Tsai-yong*.—Then let us take something else. What do you say to "The Vengeance of the Beautiful Concubine Chao-keun?"

*Neaou*.—Why sing of vengeance in the palace of the Hans, where peace and concord reign? In such a calm evening, my lord, and before such a delightful landscape, let me hear "When the Tempest Shakes the Pines."

*Tsai-yong*.—Very well, it is a fine song. (Sings and accompanies himself on the lute.)

*Neaou*.—(Interrupts.) You make a mistake. Why do you sing to the tune "When I Dream of Returning to my Birth-place?"

*Tsai-yong*.—True, I shall begin again.

*Neaou*.—You are wrong once more, my lord; that is the air of "The Abandoned Turtle-dove."

*Tsai-yong*.—I take one tune for the other.

*Neaou*.—You cannot do that unwittingly. You despise me and will not sing before me.

*Tsai-yong*.—Such a thought is far from me. The fact is that I cannot use this instrument.

*Neaou*.—And why not?

*Tsai-yong*.—Because I used always my old one when I sang formerly. This lute is new and I am not accustomed to it.

*Neaou*.—Where is the other one?

*Tsai-yong*.—I threw it away long ago.

*Neaou*.—Why?

*Tsai-yong*.—Because I have a new one.

*Neaou*.—Suffer your servant to ask you another question. Why do you not leave this instrument and return to the old one?

*Tsai-yong*.—Do you think, wife, that at the bottom of my heart I do not love my old lute? But unfortunately I cannot leave this one!

*Neaou*.—Allow me to put to you one more question, my lord. As you cannot abandon this instrument, how comes it that you are still attached to the other? I fancy that your heart is far away.

*Tsai-yong*.—(Sadly.) I have broken my old lute, and now that I desire to play on this one, I am unable to do so, for I confound one note with another.

*Neaou*.—The confusion exists only in your heart. Whom is it that you think of with so much emotion?

*Tsai-yong*.—Whom can I think of?

*Neaou*.—How can I tell? Of some one, perhaps, you would not like to see again.

And the scene continues in this style until the graduate's secret is torn from him by his wife's shrewdness and tenacity.

This conjugal story leads to another of a different description, without which no account of the Chinese drama can be held satisfactory. But before doing this there should be explained a peculiar phase of Chinese life generally avoided by writers of travels.

We have all heard how a Chinaman considers a large family one of the signal favors of his gods. There are times, however, when a husband's hopes to rear posterity are shaken in one way or another, and he seeks out of doors for pleasures he cannot find at home. This destroys home life to a degree incompatible with Chinese notions. The law empowers him, therefore, to introduce into his family circle a concubine, whose children by him are considered legitimate, if the lawful wife have no



issue, while in the contrary cases they are bastards whose paternity has been recognized. It is only fair to add that this custom is not general; that the interloper can enter the household with the wife's leave only, under duly defined conditions, and that she owes obedience to the mistress of the house. Taking into account woman's idiosyncrasies, it is easy to guess what heart-burnings such a system can occasion and what opportunities it affords for character-drawing. The following affords a fair example:

### A Social Drama.

Le is a rough and simple citizen with a modicum of brains, and he is captivated by Chang-eon, a young and fickle woman of doubtful reputation, but unquestionably beautiful. She is also endowed by nature with remarkable cleverness and fertility of resource. Small wonder, then, that Le gets hopelessly entangled in her meshes. She feels no love for him, though a strong one for his money, and she proposes to perform the ceremonies necessary before gaining admission under his roof, and to which we shall give the name of marriage, since they constitute a sort of polygamy. Le has not the power, perhaps not the will, to refuse her. His wife, Leou, as might be expected, indignantly but vainly protests against his decision, and this is what ensues:

*Le.*—I will marry her.

*Leou.*—If you do that, you will kill me with grief. (Sings.) My indignation waxes so fierce that I long to plunge her powdered face into the waters of the river Me-lo. If her passion for you grows stronger, it is because she yearns to deprive

me of the pleasures to which I am entitled. Turn your ear away from the insidious words of her mouth. This vile woman deceives you, she trades on her charms, and still you are eager to marry her! (Sings in another key.) What! you propose admitting this she-wolf into your house. Remember that, when you have married her, harmony will give place to petty quarrels. How can you stoop to leave your lawful wife for a degraded concubine? If you do not take up my defence when she and I fall out, I shall quit this place. If I hasten to meet you when you return home this woman will heap insults upon me from her window.

*Le.*—You misjudge her; she is as incapable as myself of doing such things.

*Leou.*—(Sings.) Turn a deaf ear to a creature whose heart is full of malice. She will lose no opportunity of abusing your scenes and torment you with her tongue. To satisfy her you will require heaps of gold and silver. The day will come when you will have to pawn your farm and your lands, and to sacrifice your silken stuffs. You will then resemble a leafless twig.

*Le.*—Ah, she possesses so many attractions, how can I help being in love with her?

*Leou.*—(Sings.) You love her glances and you worship her painted and finely arched black eyebrows. But remember that her brow, with its splendor, like that of the flower Fou-yang, brings ruin on homes; that her lips, red like a cherry and soft like a peach, help to devour men's souls. Her breath is as sweet as the odor of the clover tree, but I fear that a gust of wind will scatter all these charms.

*Le.*—You dread imaginary things. At any rate, I am resolved to marry her.

No other conclusion could be expected. Chang-eou is introduced into the house to pay Leou the homage prescribed by custom.

*Chang-eou.*—(On the threshold.) Mr. Le! Mr. Le! (He

comes out of his room.) Are your ears stopped up? I have been calling you since the last hour and you do not hear me! I come to pay my respects to your wife. Four distinct bows I shall make her. She will receive the first sitting, at the second I expect her to rise, and she will return the third and fourth. If she conforms herself to the requirements of politeness, so much the better; but if she does not, I shall leave the house at once.

*Le.*—Come, there is no hurry; I shall go and speak with her. (To *Leou*.) Wife, Chang-eou is here, and her desire is to do homage to you. Do not fail to return her last two bows. If you do not respect established usages she will quarrel with you.

*Leou.*—For the sake of peace, I am ready to do as you wish.

*Chang-eou.*—(To *Leou*.) Madam, be pleased to sit down before receiving your sister's homage. (Bows twice.)

*Le.*—My wife will now rise.

*Chang-eou.*—(Bowing several times.) What devil of a nail fixes her to that chair? How is it that she does not acknowledge my courtesies? (Gets angry.)

*Leou* loses her temper also, and sharply scolds her husband. The latter does his utmost to calm her and to put an end to this unpleasant scene, but he finds his task a thankless one. *Chang-eou* feels that she is bound to win the advantage, and she is not the person to waste an opportunity of attaining her object. "I tell you once for all, *Le*," she exclaims, "that if you love her I must retire, but that if you love me you must repudiate her!" "How can I turn her off?" asks *Le*, "when she is my wife and the mother of my son and daughter?" "What!" replies *Chang-eou*, "besides refusing to listen to me you take her part! Enough; I leave the house." But *Le* cannot consent to lose his paramour. He resolves to cast

off Leou, and when the latter hears of this she swoons. Grief kills her in a short time.

### The Lime Story Circle.

One might again fancy that the judgment of Solomon had passed the borders of China, and suggested to the author of the *Hwin-han-ki*, or *Lime-circle Story*, the incident on which this drama turns. The Chinese play exhibits a very lively picture of the social habits of the Chinese—the relations existing between husbands and wives, and handmaids, and the descendants of both; the modes of educating boys and girls; the superstitions, sacrifices and religious services; the injustice and cruelties of the tribunals; the corruptions of the officials from the meanest to the mightiest. After all sorts of complications and intrigues, and the temporary triumph by falsehood and bribery of a wicked wife and her confederates, the story culminates in their exposure and punishment by the sagacious magistrate, who is the last appellate judge.

There are present the governor, Ching, bearing from the emperor the golden ensign and the sword of power; the widow Ma, who had been living in adultery with Chao during her husband's lifetime; and they are now in collusion in order to obtain the property of the deceased, and claim his child as their legitimate offspring.

There are, also, Hai-tang, the real mother of the child; Chang-lin, her brother, and sundry other persons. They all kneel in the presence of the governor.

*Ching.*—Who is the mother of the child?

*Widow Ma.*—I—I.

*Ching.*—All you who are gathered together, tell me who is the mother of the child.

*All.*—Ma, Ma, is the mother.

*Ching.*—Call Chang-ling. Get a piece of chalk, and make a circle, in the middle of which you will place the child. Set the two women to pull at the child together, the true mother will easily get possession of it, the false mother will not be able.

(The officer makes the circle and places the child in the centre. Ma drags the child out of the circle. Hai-tang fails to do so.)

*Ching.*—Surely Hai-tang cannot be the mother of the child, or she would have obtained possession of it. Officer, seize her and apply the bastinado.

(The officer obeys.)

*Ching.*—Let them have another trial. Let us once more see who gets the child.

(Again the child is placed in the circle, and again Widow Ma gets hold of the child.)

*Ching.*—Woman! have we not given you every chance? You did nothing to obtain the child. Officer, deal her out severer blows.

*Hai-tang.*—Excellence! O, check your anger; it frightens me like the noise of thunder. Lay aside that threatening frown, terrible as the look of a wolf or tiger. Your servant was married to Ma, and bore this child to him. Nine months I carried it in my bosom, three years I have nourished it with my own milk, and I have always treated it with maternal love. When it was cold it was I who warmed its delicate limbs. With pain and weariness I have brought it to its present age of five. I know how weak it was; I knew it would have been injured had I seized the child violently to drag it from her who held it so strongly. I could not obtain my child without tearing its limbs asunder. I had rather perish than subject my child to what it must have suffered had I attempted to drag it out of the circle. Pity me!

She sings:

A tender mother could do no other!  
 Judge, Excellency! judge for yourself.  
 The poor child's arms are soft and weak as pith  
 Hidden by the outer hemp. And how could she,  
 Cold, cruel as she is, partake my fears?  
 But you, sir, you—you should perceive the truth.  
 Our fates how different! she is rich and strong;  
 I helpless, poor, humiliated, scorned!  
 Yes! had I been so violent as she,  
 You would have heard the poor child's breaking bones,  
 And seen his flesh in fragments!

*Ching*—We cannot always see our way, and yet we may  
 sometimes reach the secret workings of the heart. Do not the  
 sages say:

How can a man conceal his real self  
 When you can read his actions? can explore  
 The motives of his doings, and discern  
 The goal toward which he runs?

There was a marvelous power in that chalk circle. It  
 is certain that the widow sought to grasp the child, that  
 with him she might grasp the fortune of Ma, her late  
 husband. Might she not have thought that the con-  
 cealed truth would force itself into open day?

*Ching* recites this verse:

She seized the child the heritage to seize,  
 But the white ring revealed her treacheries!  
 She had a sweet expression, but within  
 There lay a mine of cruelty and sin.  
 But the true mother is found. Bring forward the adulterer.  
 (Chang-lin, kneeling, produces Chao.)

*Ching*.—A pretty business this. Let us have the truth—  
 the truth in all its details. To gratify a criminal passion,  
 you poisoned Ma. You took possession of this child that you  
 might get hold of his inheritance. You bribed these men and  
 women to bring forward their false testimony.

*Chao*.—Your servant is but the clerk of the court. How could he be ignorant of the penal law? That he is so, is the fault of the governor of Ching-chow. I am but a mute instrument in his hands. I only hold the pencil, and write down the answers of the accused. If there be errors on the record, it is no fault of the clerk.

*Ching*.—I do not ask you about errors on the record. I ask you if, to indulge a criminal passion, you poisoned Ma.

*Chao*.—O, sir! look on that countenance covered with a mask. Remove the paint, you will find a hideous face, which no man would pick up in the street. How could such an one seduce your servant?

*Widow Ma*.—What! You never ceased to tell me that I was beautiful as the beautiful Kwan-yin—and now to treat me thus insultingly! Perfidious cur! that deserves not the name of man!

*Chang-Lin*.—Yesterday, while the snow was falling in large flakes Chao and Widow Ma were together. They followed two soldiers to come to an understanding with them. It is clear he was her lover. Excellency, call the soldiers and inquire of them.

*Chao*.—We ourselves brought them.

*Ching*.—Take hold of Chao, officer, and flog him lustily with the heavy bamboo.

*Hai-Tang* sings:

You only thought to deal with Mistress Ma!  
You never dreamed I should come back again.  
Did I not see ye both upon the road?  
And now we meet again. Reply, reply!

(Chao feigns death.)

*Ching*.—The fellow pretends to be dead. Lift him up, officer, throw water upon his face. Let us waste no time. Confess.

*Chao*.—I have sinned with this woman; but I am not a murderer. I did buy the poison, but I did not suggest the crime. This woman took it from me; she mixed it in a basin of soup. She caused her husband's death. I did not carry away the child. I told her, as she was not its mother, to leave the matter alone.

She said if she got the child she got Ma's fortune with it. I am but a poor clerk. Where could I have found the money to bribe these witnesses? She bribed them. She bribed the soldiers to get rid of Hai-tang. Yes! she did it. She did it!

*Widow Ma.*—Scoundrel that you are! What shall I say? Well, I did it all; 'tis no great misfortune to die. We may live in a future world, and be faithful to one another!

*Ching.*—Listen, all you who are present, and hear my supreme decree! The governor of Ching-chow has transgressed the law. He is deprived of his button and his belt; he is degraded; he must return to the people and never again have public employment. The false witnesses are to receive eighty blows, and to be banished one hundred *les* from home. Chao and his comrade, being officials, must be more severely punished. One hundred blows, and to be transported beyond the frontiers to an arid uninhabited land. The adulterous woman and her infamous accomplice shall be taken to the public square and suffer a slow and ignominious death. They shall be cut up into one hundred and twenty pieces. All they possess shall be transferred to Hai-tang and her son, who is committed to her tender care. Her brother, Chang-lin, may quit his employment and live with his sister; but he is to be the executioner, to decapitate the guilty pair.

The drama concludes by Hai-tang singing a triumphant hymn to the honor and glory of the just judge, telling him that the history of the chalk circle shall extend to the four seas, the limits of earth, and be repeated throughout the empire.

#### Exclusion of Women.

To the student of the English drama it is well known that, before the restoration of Charles II, women were not permitted on the English stage, while in Italy they



were unknown as late as 1740. Their introduction on European boards is probably the outgrowth of progress or public sentiment; but in China the reverse is the case. In that country, acting, as a profession for women, was countenanced until the middle of the eighteenth century, when they were excluded, nominally on account of their profligacy, and this regulation is still in force. It is difficult to ascertain how far this measure was justified, but it probably had a political rather than a moral signification. Tolerating actresses, especially in a country where the drama possesses a great influence, is a violation of the traditional principle of government, in virtue of which women are constantly kept in subjection. A talented actress is sure to be a popular idol; wealth and honors are laid at her feet, her fancies are humored, and her irregular life tolerated. She enjoys an apparent superiority over the general run of men, and her sex thereby gains strength and influence. Her ambitious sisters, too, in other walks of life, strive to throw off their shackles. Many will urge that, if this view be correct, the authorities would have found an earlier opportunity of suppressing what they regard as an evil; and, in reply, it may be said that our limited acquaintance with Chinese history renders it impossible to determine in what way social and other causes hindered the carrying out of this so-called reform at an earlier date. If, on the other hand, the measure had a purely moral tendency, who can explain why the government delayed so long to enforce it? It is proper to add that, whatever the reason, it did not affect the nature of the drama, although from a strictly artistic point of view it caused

a grotesqueness in the love parts, together with other incongruities.

It is worthy of note that, while in the titles of pieces an elaborate display of words is used, as "The Slave of the Treasures He Guards," in lieu of the simple but comprehensive word "Miser," the contrary is the case when giving names to characters, and these are often adapted to the bearer's position and proclivities. Witticisms are greatly sought after, and humor and satire are far from neglected. For instance, the presiding official at a competitive examination is thus made to address the candidates, his comical vein inducing us to overlook his buffoonery:

#### A Competitive Examination.

"Gentlemen graduates, by a decision of the sovereign court of Le-pou I am appointed examiner-in-chief, and as a new triennial period is about to open, the emperor has charged me to preside over the examens. It is for me to discern each candidate's merit. But, gentlemen, do not alarm yourselves, for I am one of those magistrates who love pleasure and gaiety, and I have nothing common, in this respect, with my immediate predecessor. During the last examination, for example, the first essay had for its theme a literary question; the second, a moral one, and the third, one on politics. I propose altering all this. Instead of these three dissertations, you will have to write the second line of a distich, to guess an enigma, and to sing a song. Whoever completes the distich will be able to solve the enigma and to sing the song. He will be raised to the rank of a mandarin and

be covered with glory; he will wear in his cap flowers embroidered in gold, and sit at the sumptuous banquet of the doctors in the imperial palace. As for the man that fails, his face will be smudged with ink, and he will be driven out of this hall with sticks."

For many ages the native dramatists have lashed avarice and official corruption—especially the former—yet both are as widespread as ever, and the Chinese remain one of the most avaricious nations on the face of the globe. Again, the depravity of their priesthood and the ridiculous aspects of their religions have been exposed with unsparing vigor; still, priest and faith have lost none of their influence over the masses.

### III.

#### *The Japanese Drama.*

In Japan the drama, though growing in favor, is little patronized except by the lower classes, with whom, as in China, it is the most popular of all amusements. While in other branches of art progress was extremely rapid during the closing decades of the nineteenth century, in this the nation remains, almost as it has ever been, without a dramatic literature worthy of the name. Apart from its native elements of music and song, dance and pantomime, with an admixture of legendary or historic narrative, the Japanese drama has been chiefly transplanted from China, and from the conventional Chinese types has never made any serious attempt to emancipate itself. In lyric poetry there is more attempt at originality, though not of a high order, the effect, moreover, being marred by translation and by the obscurity of the allusions. The following are rendered into English from a selection of lyrical odes familiar to every Japanese household, even children storing their memory with some of them. They are all of a peaceful character, didactic, descriptive or amatory. Not a few of them are more than a thousand years old, and the most recent date back at least six hundred years:

## TAIRA NO KANEMORI.

Tho' aye I strive my lot to hide,  
My face to all the secret tells:  
My changing visage, sorely tried,  
Shows that deep passion in me dwells:  
And all men ask,  
What griefs my altered features task?

## YUN-SHI-NAI SHIN-WO-KENOPII.

Thy beauty is throughout the land  
As well-known as the furious play  
Of billows on Takaschi's strand  
That drench the venturesome with spray,  
Who come their sweep too nigh:  
So she who hath thee once beheld,  
To tears of jealous love compelled,  
Her sleeve shall ne'er be dry.

## KAMAKURA NO UDAIJIN.

O, that throughout an endless life  
I might in peace dwell, far from strife!  
For ever watch the fishing yawl,  
And view the net's abundant haul:  
How fair to me,  
How pleasant such a lot would be!

**Modern Japanese Literature.**

The conditions of the present day are more favorable than those of any previous time to the production of good poetry in Japan. The ordinary language, by the more thorough assimilation of its Chinese element, has gained considerably in fitness for poetical purposes, and its phonetic capabilities are now appreciably greater than ever before. Still more important considerations are the

great stimulus which the national life has received from the introduction of European ideas, and the attention which has been recently directed to the poetry of Europe.

The original poems include verses written before the colossal image of Buddha at Kamakura, an ode to the four seasons, and a war-song. Neither the original poems nor the translations have striking merits in themselves, but they attracted a large measure of public attention and gave rise to a lively controversy between the adherents of the old and new styles. They also produced a school of imitators, among whom the novelist, Yamada, was one of the most eminent.

Dr. Florenz, writing in 1892, says that 1888 may be taken as the culminating point of the favor shown to the new style of poetry. A reaction then set in, which, however, was of short duration. The last few years have produced a considerable quantity of verse more or less in the new form, of which all that can now be said is that, on a hasty examination, it reveals some promising features. Regularity of form is more carefully attended to—a great desideratum in the longer kinds of Japanese poetry.

The day of Tanka and Haikai seems to have passed. These miniature forms of poetry are now the exception and not the rule. The following specimen, which may be taken as characteristic of the vague and dreamy style of most recent Japanese poetry, is translated from a little volume of prose and verse by three authors, entitled *Hana Momiji*, or *Flower and Autumn Leaves*, published in 1898:

## THE BAMBOO FLUTE BY THE SHORE.

## I.

In the shade of the firs of the craggy cliff,  
To-night again a bamboo flute is heard:  
Is it some fisher-boy, solacing his heart  
From the woes of a world bitter with salt and seaweed?

Moonlight or dark, he little cares,  
Night after night he visits these fir-trees' shade.  
In the music of his bamboo flute  
There may be heard cadences which tell of yearning love.

A day had passed since the courtiers of the lord of the  
land  
Held night-long revel here, wandering forth upon the  
beach,  
While the bark of the autumn moon pursued its crystal  
course,  
When the fisher's flute was for the first time heard.

A day had passed since the ladies of our lord,  
Mooring their gay pleasure-boat, held revel here,  
Attuning the music of their golden lutes  
To the song of the breeze through the fir-trees on the  
cliffs,  
When the fisher's flute was for the first time heard.

## II.

On nights when the dew lay heavy on the reeds of the  
chilly shore,  
And the wind of the firs came in gusts down from the  
crag,  
He never failed to come—this fisher boy:  
His bamboo flute was heard in clear-sounding notes.

On nights when the rattling of the hail was loud,  
And the ripples on the beach were changed to ice,  
He never failed to come—this fisher-boy:  
His bamboo flute was heard in subdued tones.

On nights when evening fell wild with mountain blasts,  
And the sand was whirled up into the air,  
He never failed to come—this fisher-boy:  
His bamboo flute was heard in confused notes.

On nights of rain, when darkness came down with a  
    sound of moaning waves,  
And the rocks were steeped in moisture,  
He never failed to come—this fisher-boy:  
His bamboo flute was heard, languid and faint.

## III.

To-night the autumn moon was changed,  
So long his yearning love has endured.  
Still his bamboo flute is heard,  
Its tune and measure ever more entrancing.

With the storm from the cliff it was troubled,  
With the echoes from the fir-trees it became clear,  
With the surges from the deep it was frenzied,  
With the waves on the rocks it became choked.

Even the clouds over Onoye paused to listen  
To its notes, now calling clearly, and now with strangled  
    utterance.  
What wonder, then, that some one descends from the  
    bower above,  
And comes forth absorbed in reverie!

For awhile the flute ceased its importunities;  
But hark! louder than before  
The music of the bamboo bursts forth, making the sky  
    resound,  
And in accord with it, how sweet!  
Are heard the notes of a golden lute.

Some time the wide-spreading clouds, descending from  
    Onoye,  
Bore away with them the musicians of the fragrant rocks  
    below,



Up to that region where the bark of the moon,  
With altered helm, steered straight to meet them.

### Development of the Drama.

About the close of the sixth century, one Hada Kawatsu, a Japanese by birth, but of Chinese parentage, was ordered to arrange theatrical entertainments suitable to the country, and produced, it is said by some, five-and-thirty plays. But the origin of the drama is commonly ascribed to the introduction of a dance called Sambaso, as a charm against volcanic disturbances, such as occurred in 805, this still continuing in use as a prelude to more serious performances. At the opening of the twelfth century a woman, calling herself Iso no Zenji, became famous for her dancing and posturing in male attire, thence being styled "the mother of the Japanese drama." But the real author of the legitimate drama was Samwaka Kanzaburo, who, in 1624, opened the first theatre at Yedo, play-houses being later erected in the capital and in provincial towns. The Mikado has his court theatre, and at the residences of nobles actors sometimes give performances of a patriotic nature; but persons of rank are seldom seen at the public theatres.

### Pantomime.

Like the ancient Greek tragedies, the drama in Japan was in its beginnings closely associated with religion. Its immediate parent was the *Kagura*, a pantomime dance, as to the remote origin of which a myth was cur-

rent at the beginning of the eighth century, though it is performed even at the present day, to the sound of fife and drum, at Shinto festivals. The sun-goddess, it is related, disgusted at the unseemly pranks of her brother, Susa-no-wo, shut herself up in the rock-cave of heaven and left the world to darkness. Upon this the gods assembled in the dry bed of the river of heaven—the Milky Way—and caused the “Terrible Female of Heaven” to array herself in a fantastical manner, and, standing on an inverted tub, which gave out a hollow sound when she stamped on it, to perform a mimic dance, which had the desired effect.

#### Dialogue.

When the dance and music of the *Kagura* were supplemented by dialogue, the plays termed No were the result. Their beginning dates from the fourteenth century, and they were at first purely religious performances, intended to propitiate the chief deities of the Shinto religion. Later a manager of one of the No theatres, named Kwan-ami Kiyotsugu, attracted the notice of the ruling Shogun, who took him into his immediate service, and from this time the No were under the special patronage of the Shoguns. In the Yedo period the Shoguns gave great attention to No performances, and even to-day there are remains of their former popularity. Representations are still given at Tokio, Kioto and other places by the descendants or successors of the old managers who founded the art five centuries ago. They are attended by small but select audiences

*THE SUN-GODDESS AND THE KAGURA*

*After an original painting by A. Russell*

*The gods assembled in the dry bed of the river of heaven—the Milky Way—and caused the "Terrible Female of Heaven" to array herself in a fantastical manner, and standing on an inverted tub, to perform the mimic dance.*





composed almost entirely of ex-daimios or military nobles and their former retainers.

### Plot of the No Dramas.

As dramas the No have little value. There is no action to speak of, and dramatic propriety and effect are hardly thought of. The plot is usually somewhat as follows:

A priest appears on the scene. He announces his name and informs the audience that he is setting out on his travels. Presently he arrives at a temple, a battle-field, or other celebrated spot, when a ghost or deity appears, who relates to him the local legend. An exchange of edifying sentiments follows, and the supernatural personage finally reveals his identity. The whole piece rarely occupies more than six or seven pages of print, and requires less than an hour to perform.

The number of the dramatis personæ varies from two or three to five or six, and to these must be added the chorus and a few musicians. The chorus has various functions, chief of which is to chant a narrative that serves to explain and supplement the action of the piece, or to recite poetical descriptions, thus supplying the place of scenery.

### The Japanese No Theatre.

The following description of a No theatre is from Chamberlain's *Classical Poetry of the Japanese*:

"The stage, which has remained unaltered in every respect since the beginning of the fifteenth century, is

a square, wooden room open on all sides but one and supported on pillars, the side of the square being about eighteen feet. It is surmounted by a quaint roof, somewhat resembling those to be seen on Buddhist temples, and is connected with the green-room by a gallery some nine feet wide. Upon this gallery part of the action sometimes takes place. Added on to the back of the stage is a narrow space, where sits the orchestra, composed of one flute-player, two performers on instruments resembling a tambourine and one beater of the drum, while the chorus, whose number is not fixed, squat on the ground to the right of the spectators. The back of the stage, the only side not open to the air, is painted with a pine tree, in accordance with ancient usage, while three small pine trees are planted in the court which divides the gallery from the space occupied by the rest of the audience. The covered place for spectators runs around three sides of the stage. Masks are worn by such of the actors as take the parts of females or of supernatural beings, and the dresses are gorgeous in the extreme. Scenery, however, is allowed no place on the lyric stage."

#### A Favorite Play.

The *Takasago* is the best known and considered the finest of the No dramas. The dramatis personæ are Tamorari, a guardian of the Shinto shrine of Aso, in Kiushiu; an old man representing the spirit of the Sumiyoshi fir tree; an old woman representing the spirit of the Takasago fir tree; the god of Sumiyoshi, and the chorus.



*Chorus.*—Now for the first time he ties the lace of his travelling garb; distant many a long day's journey is his goal.

*Tomonari.*—Now, this is I, Tomonari, guardian of the shrine of Aso, in the province of Higo, in Kiushiu. Never having seen the capital, I have now made up my mind and am going to see it. Moreover, I wish to take this opportunity of viewing the bay of Takasago, in Harima.

*Cho.*—To-day he has made up his mind, and has donned his travelling raiment for a journey to a distant goal—the capital. With waves that rise along the shore, and a genial wind of spring upon the ship-path, how many days pass without a trace of him we know not, until at length he has reached the longed-for bay of Takasago, on the coast of Harima.

*Old Man and Old Woman.*—The wind of spring that blows through the fir-tree of Takasago has gone down with the sun; the vesper bell is heard from the temple of Onoye.

*O. W.*—The waves are hidden from us by the mist-en-shrouded rocks.

*Both.*—There is naught but the sound to mark the rise and fall of the tide.

*O. M.*—Whom can I take to be my friend? Except the fir-tree of Takasago, my ancient comrade, there is none to converse with me of the bygone days on which are ever gathering white snows (of forgetfulness). I grow older and older, accustomed to hear nothing but the wind in the fir-tree either when I rise or go to sleep in the nest of an aged crane, where the night-long moon sheds its rays, and the spring sends down its hoar-frosts. So I make my own heart my companion, and thus give utterance to my thoughts.

*Both.*—Let us sweep away the fir-needles that lie beneath the tree, sleeve touching sleeve of our garments, whercon rest fallen leaves shaken down by the shore-wind asking their news of the firs.

*Tomo.*—While waiting for some of the villagers to appear, an old man and an old woman have come hither. I pray you, old people, permit me to ask you a question.

*O. M.*—Is it I whom you address? What is it you desire to know?

*Tomô.*—Which is the tree that is called the fir-tree of Takasago?

*O. M.*—This very tree whose shade we are cleansing is the fir-tree of Takasago.

*Tomô.*—The phrase "growing old together" is used of the Takasago and Suminoye fir-trees. But this place and Sumiyoshi (the same as Suminoye) are in provinces distant from one another. How, then, can they be called the fir-trees which "grow old together?"

*O. M.*—As you have deigned to observe, it is stated in the preface to the *Kokinshû* that the fir-trees of Takasago and Suminoye make us feel as if they were growing old together. However that may be, here am I, an old man, who belong to Sumiyoshi, in the province of Settsu, while the old woman here is of this place. Be pleased to tell me, if you can, how that may be.

*Tomô.*—Strange! I see you old couple here together. What mean you, then, by saying that you dwell apart, one in distant Suminoye, the other in Takasago, divided from one another by seashore, hill, and province?

*O. W.*—What an odd speech! Though many a mile of mountain and river separate them, the ways of a husband and wife whose hearts respond to one another with mutual care, are not far apart.

*O. W.*—There is Suminoye.

*O. M.*—And here is Takasago.

*Tomô.*—The fir-trees blend their hues.

*O. M.*—And the spring air——

*Tomô.*—Is genial, while——

(Here the chorus strikes in with a canticle which is chanted as the indispensable accompaniment of every regular Japanese wedding. Figures representing the two old folks under the fir-tree with brooms in their hands are, on such occasions, set out on a sort of tray.)

*Cho.*—On the four seas

Still are the waves;

The world is at peace.

Soft blow the time-winds,  
Rustling not the branches.  
In such an age,  
Blest are the very firs,  
In that they meet  
To grow old together.  
Vain indeed  
Are reverent upward looks;  
Vain even are words to tell  
Our thanks that we were born  
In such an age,  
Rich with the bounty  
Of our sovereign lord.

*O. M.*—I hear the sound of the bell of Onoye, in Takasago.

*Cho.*—The dawn is near,  
And the hoar-frost falls  
On the fir-tree twigs;  
But its leaves' dark green  
Suffers no change.  
Morning and evening  
Beneath its shade  
The leaves are swept away,  
Yet they never fail.  
True it is  
That these fir-trees  
Shed not all their leaves;  
Their verdure remains fresh  
For ages long,  
As the Masaka trailing vine;  
Even amongst evergreen trees—  
The emblem of unchangeableness—  
Exalted is their fame  
As a symbol to the end of time—  
The fame of the fir-trees that have grown old together.

*Tomo.*—And ye who have made known the bygone story of these ancient firs whose branches have indeed earned fame—tell me, I pray you, by what names are ye called?

*O. M. and O. W.*—Why conceal it longer? We are the spirits

of the fir-trees of Takasago and Suminoye that have grown old together, manifested under the form of a married pair.

*Cho.*—Wonderful! A miracle wrought by the fir-trees of this famous place!

*O. M. and O. W.*—Plants and trees are without souls——

*Cho.*—Yet in this august reign——

*O. M. and O. W.*—Even for plants and trees——

*Cho.*—Good is it to live

For ever and ever

In this land

Of our great Sovereign,

Under his rule.

To Sumiyoshi, therefore,

He would now take his way

And there wait upon the god.

He embarks in a fisher's boat

That lies by the beach,

Where the waves of evening roll,

And, spreading his sail

To the favoring breeze,

Puts out into the deep.

*Tomo.*—From Takasago I set sail

In this skiff that lies by the shore,

And put forth with the tide

That goes out with the moon.

I pass under the lee

Of Awaji's shore,

I leave far behind me Naruwo,

And now I have arrived

At Suminoye.

(The god of Sumiyoshi appears, and enters into a poetical dialogue with the chorus.)

*Cho.*—We give thanks for this manifestation;

Ever anew we will worship

Thy spirit with sacred dance

By Sumiyoshi's pure moonlight.

And now, world without end,

The extended arms of the dancing maidens

In sacerdotal robes  
 Will expel noxious influences;  
 Their hands folded to rest in their bosoms  
 Will embrace all good fortune;  
 The hymn of a thousand autumns  
 Will draw down blessings on the people,  
 And the song of ten thousand years  
 Prolong our sovereign's life.  
 And all the while,  
 The voice of the breeze,  
 As it blows through the firs  
 That grow old together,  
 Will yield us delight.

Some of the *No* have more dramatic action than the Takasago. Another example is the *Tosen*, of which the following is a résumé:

An inhabitant of Hakosaki, in Kiushiu, informs the audience that, under an embargo placed by the Japanese government on Chinese ships thirteen years before, he had detained a vessel from that country and made the owner his cowherd.

The Chinaman's two sons come to ransom their father. His master gives him leave to go, but just when they are about to sail two sons born to him in Japan appear and propose to accompany him. Their request is refused by the master, and the father, distracted between his wish to return home with his Chinese family and his reluctance to leave his Japanese children behind, tries to drown himself. Much appropriate sentiment ensues, which touches the heart of the master so that he allows all five to depart together.

In *Dojoji* a priest appears and informs the audience that he is about to consecrate a new bell for his temple,

the former one having been long ago removed. He then directs his acolyte to make the necessary preparations, enjoining on him specially to take care that no woman shall be present at the ceremony.

A dancing-girl approaches and proposes to dance in honor of the occasion. The acolyte forgets his instructions and allows her to do so. She takes the opportunity of seizing the bell by the suspending ring and bringing it down over her, greatly to the consternation of the priest. He calls together his fellows and relates a legend which explains why women were not allowed to be present:

"A man had an only daughter, who formed a union with a Yamabushi (a sort of lay-priest). When pressed to marry her, he ran away and hid in the bell of the temple. She pursued him, and came to a river which she could not cross. But the fire of her passion was so intense that it changed her into a serpent, in which form she found no difficulty in swimming over. Coming to the temple, the serpent coiled itself around the bell, which was melted by the heat of her passion, the false lover perishing at the same time."

The priest, having told his legend, joins with his colleagues in reciting with might and main all kinds of Buddhist prayers and invocations, by which the bell is raised to its former position and the dancing-girl forced to reveal herself in her serpent shape. Involved in flames, she plunges into the adjoining river and disappears.

The *Kiogen* (mad-words) are to the *No* what farce is to the regular drama. They are performed on the same

stage in the intervals between the more serious pieces, but differ from the *No* in having no chorus and in being composed in the pure colloquial dialect of the time. They are even shorter, and of the slightest construction. The following is an example:

A daimio sends his servant to the city to buy a talisman which will work miracles. The servant meets with a swindler, who sells him an object which he calls the Mallet of Daikoku (every blow of which is supposed to produce a piece of gold), telling him a charm by repeating which, as he holds the mallet, he can have anything he pleases. The servant returns with the prize. The daimio asks him to produce a horse. The servant repeats his charm, and declares that the horse is already saddled and bridled. The daimio pretends to think his servant the horse, jumps on his back and rides him about the stage, in spite of his protestations.

### The Popular Drama.

It would not be correct to say that the popular drama owes nothing to the *No*. But it certainly followed a different and independent line of development. Its literary progenitor is the *Taiheiki*, which was chanted or recited in public by men who made this their profession. The *Taiheiki* was followed by more or less dramatic stories, which were recited by a single person seated before a desk, to the accompaniment of taps of a fan to mark the time or to give emphasis. To this was subsequently added the music of the samisen, a three-stringed guitar introduced from Loochoo. A favorite story for

this purpose was the *Joruri*, which relates the loves of the famous Yoshitsune with a heroine whose name, *Joruri*, is now used as a synonym for a whole class of dramatic compositions.

Toward the middle of the seventeenth century we hear of *Joruri-Katari*—chanters of *Joruri*—at Yedo, for whom two authors, named Oka Seibei and Tonomiya Yajiro, are said to have written a number of pieces, some of which, known as *Kompira-bon*, are still in existence. They relate the adventures of a hero named *Kompira*, nine feet two inches high, with a face so red that nothing could be redder, whose doughty deeds in quelling demons and slaying savage beasts are still the delight of the Japanese schoolboy.

#### ◎ Kuni.

The first Kabuki Shibai, or popular theatre, as distinguished from the No Shibai, and from the Ayatsuri, Shibai or marionette theatre, is said to have been established at Kioto early in the seventeenth century. We are told that a priestess of the great temple of Kidzuki, in Idzumo, named O Kuni, having made the acquaintance of one Nagoya Sanzaburo, ran away with him to Kioto. There they got together a number of dancing-girls and gave performances on the bank of the river Kamo, where the Theatre street stands at the present day. O Kuni, as a priestess, would naturally be acquainted with the pantomimic dances performed in honor of the Shinto gods, and was doubtless herself a trained dancer and mime. Owing to certain abuses, the employment of women as actors was forbidden by the authorities.



Their place was taken by boys, but this also was eventually prohibited. A marionette theatre was next established. In 1661 it was transferred to Osaka, where it was famous in subsequent dramatic history as the Takemoto Za. The marionette theatre is still popular in Japan. The puppets are elaborate contrivances, fitted with machinery for rolling the eyeballs, raising the eyebrows, opening and closing the mouth, moving the fingers so as to grasp and flirt a fan, and so on. The popularity of the Takemoto Za procured it several rivals, the most celebrated of which was the Toyotake Za.

### *The Dramatist Chikamatsu.*

The fame of the Takemoto Za was chiefly owing to the genius of Chikamatsu Monzayemon, who is unquestionably the most prominent figure in the history of the Japanese drama. The birthplace of this remarkable man has been as much disputed as that of Homer. The most probable statement is that he was a Samurai of Hagi, in Choshu, where he was born in 1653. It is said that in his boyhood he became a priest. He himself tells us that he was a retainer of more than one noble house in Kioto. For some reason his services ceased and he became a Ronin. The Ronin, that is, a Samurai who has been dismissed for misconduct, or whose indocile temper has found the severe discipline of the fraternity irksome beyond endurance, is a very familiar personage during the Yedo period of Japanese history, not only in fiction, but in real life. Countless deeds of desperate courage and many atrocious crimes are related

of them, among which may be mentioned the well-known revenge of the forty-seven Ronins and their subsequent suicide, and the murderous attacks on the British legation in 1861 and 1862.

In the early days of foreign intercourse with Japan Ronin was a word of fear to all quiet, law-abiding people. It is significant that the principal playwright, as well as the most eminent novelist of this period, should both belong to this lawless class.

After leaving the service of the Kioto nobles, Chikamatsu wrote a number of stories and pieces of no great merit for dramatic performance at Kioto. One of those, formerly attributed to Saikaku, is the *Kaijin Yashima*, which bears traces of a study of the older No drama. Chikamatsu's earliest dated work was written in 1685. In 1690 he took up his residence in Osaka, where his connection with the Takemoto marionette theatre began. From this time until his death, in 1724, he produced in rapid succession a number of dramas which, whatever their faults, leave no doubt of his possessing a fertile and inventive genius.

On a superficial examination of one of Chikamatsu's plays, we hardly recognize it as a drama at all, and take it for a romance with more than the usual proportion of dialogue. All the Joruri contain a large narrative element of a poetical character. This part of the play is chanted to music by a chorus seated on a platform overlooking the stage on the spectator's right, where also the persons sit who declaim the speeches of the puppet actors. It is the narrative part which is more especially designated by the term Joruri. The chorus which re-

cites it is the true successor of the *Joruri-Katari*, or dramatic reciters above mentioned, and is the nucleus of the whole, the dialogue being at first merely subsidiary. It not only supplies a thread of story to connect the scenes represented by the puppets on the stage, but aids the imagination of the audience by describing expressions of countenance, scenery and much more that the resources of a theatre, and especially of a marionette theatre, fail to convey.

On closer examination, however, it becomes apparent that Chikamatsu's works are not really romances, but stage-plays. They have a well-marked movement of plot from the opening scene up to the final catastrophe; they abound in dramatic situations, and many of the scenes are obviously designed with a view to spectacular effect. These things were new in Japan, and to Chikamatsu, therefore, belongs the credit of being the creator of the modern Japanese drama.

Chikamatsu's plays are classified by the Japanese as historical plays, and dramas of life and manners. With few exceptions they are in five acts, and it is not improbable that this number had something to do with the fact that the Dutch were in the habit of visiting the theatres of Kioto and Osaka on their periodical journeys to Yedo to pay their respects to the Shogun. There is also a suspicion that the arrangements of the Japanese popular theatre, with its capacious pit and galleries, and a stage well furnished with scenery, trap-doors, turntables—as in ancient Greece—and other appliances, may owe something to hints given by these visitors. In these respects the Japanese popular theatre is certainly far in

advance of any other in Asia, and more particularly of the No playhouses above described.

Chikamatsu was a voluminous writer. The modern edition of his selected works comprises fifty-one dramas and runs to more than two thousand closely-printed pages. He is credited with the authorship of as many more. Each is of about the same length as one of Shakespeare's plays, so that they constitute a truly formidable bulk of literary matter. The novelist Kioden tells us that a three-act piece of Chikamatsu's was written in a single night, and the statement, whether true or not, bears testimony to the opinion entertained by his countrymen of his facility of composition. His works deal with all manner of subjects. They show that he was well acquainted with the Shinto and Buddhist religions, and that he possessed a wide and varied knowledge of the history and institutions of Japan and China.

The admiration of his own countrymen for Chikamatsu is unbounded, some of them going so far as to compare him with Shakespeare. It is certainly possible to trace resemblances. Both in Shakespeare and Chikamatsu comedy treads on the heels of tragedy; in both, prose is intermixed with poetry, and an exalted style of diction suited to monarchs and nobles alternates with the speech of the common people; both divided their attention between historical and other dramas; both possessed the fullest command of the resources of their respective languages, and both are tainted with a gross element.

But it is almost an idle task to compare Shakespeare with a writer whose portraiture of character is rudimentary, whose incidents are outrageously extravagant

and improbable, whose philosophy of life is wholly wanting in originality or depth, and who constantly introduces scenes brutal and revolting to a degree inconceivable by us. Of this last blemish his audiences must share the responsibility. Nothing seems to have given greater pleasure to these smug, unwarlike shopmen and mechanics with their womankind—for none of the higher classes with any self-respect ever entered a theatre—than sanguinary combats and scenes of torture, suicide and murder. They loved to have their blood curdled and their flesh made to creep, and Chikamatsu took care to supply this demand in no stinted measure. Defects like these are only partially compensated for by a certain barbaric vigor and luxuriance which undoubtedly distinguishes his works. That such a writer should hold the position of the prince of Japanese dramatists only shows by what an imperfect standard this art is judged in Japan.

It will nevertheless be found that Chikamatsu's work, with all its faults, occupies an important place in the history of Japanese literature. The writers of *No* had done something to extend the domain of the poetic art beyond the narrow limits prescribed by tradition; Chikamatsu continued their work, and took possession of, if he failed to reclaim, large tracts of subject-matter which had been neglected by his predecessors. The older poetry may be compared to a trim garden of a few yards square; Chikamatsu's *Joruri* resembles a wide clearing in a forest where the products of a rude agriculture are seen growing among tree-stumps and jungle. Compared with ancient Japanese verse, it is as a rough settlement

carved out of the forest primeval by the sturdy hands of American pioneers, as contrasted with a smooth-shaven lawn.

### The Battles of Kokusenya.

Chikamatsu's most famous play is the *Battles of Kokusenya*, 1715. Kokusenya was a famous pirate, the son of a Chinaman by a Japanese mother, one who played a considerable part in the wars of the last days of the Ming dynasty in China. As this is considered the masterpiece of the greatest of Japanese dramatists, an analysis of it may here be given.

The scene opens at the court of Nanking. The last of the Ming emperors is seen surrounded by his ministers. An envoy from the king of Tartary appears, bringing rich presents, which are piled up in the court-yard. He makes a speech in which, on behalf of his master, he asks for Kwasei, the favorite concubine of the emperor, so that he may make her his queen, and thus cement friendship between the two powers.

The emperor and his court are much disturbed by this proposal, as Kwasei was just expected to give birth to an heir to the Ming throne. A traitorous minister named Ri Toten urges its acceptance. General Go Sankei rushes forward and protests indignantly, ordering the Tartar king's presents to be taken away. The Tartar envoy replies with spirit, and is about to withdraw from the imperial presence when Ri Toten strives to pacify him. To enforce his appeal, he digs out his own left eye with a dagger and hands it on an ivory slab to the envoy, who receives it with respect and accepts it in satis-

*THE BATTLES OF KOKUSENYA*  
*After an original drawing by A. Russell*

*Kanki's wife then commits suicide, enjoining her son and Kanki to show no weakness in fighting against the Tartars, but to regard them as the enemies of brother and wife.*

CHIKAMATSU. (JAPAN DRAMA.)







faction for Go Sankei's insult to his sovereign and himself. The envoy takes his departure.

The next scene is in the apartment of the emperor's younger sister. The emperor appears, accompanied by two hundred youthful inmates of his harem, half of whom bear branches of flowering plum and half of cherry. They draw up on each side of the stage. The emperor tells his sister of Ri Toten's noble self-sacrifice and again urges the latter's suit for the hand of the princess, which had previously been rejected by her, suggesting that her answer should depend on the result of a battle between the plum and cherry squadrons of ladies. The princess agrees to this and puts herself at the head of the plum party, who, acting in collusion with the emperor, allow themselves to be defeated.

Go Sankei now rushes in, clad in full armor, and with his lance drives off both squadrons. He remonstrates with the emperor for setting an example which, if followed by the people, would lead to disastrous civil tumults, charges Ri Toten with treachery, and asserts that his digging out his eye was merely a private signal to the Tartar envoy that the time was ripe for the execution of their treacherous schemes. The emperor scoffs at this learned sophistry and kicks Go Sankei on the forehead with his imperial foot.

From all sides there now comes a sound of conchs, drums and battle shouts. The Tartars have arrived and are surrounding the place. Their general rides into the court-yard. He tells the emperor that the Tartar king's love for Kwasei was all a pretense, and that his real object was the destruction of the unborn heir to the

Ming throne. He avows Ri Toten's treacherous complicity and announces to Go Sankei his intention of carrying off the emperor and Kwasei as prisoners, and of making them serve as menials in his master's kitchen.

Go Sankei's wife, Riuka, now appears with an infant in her arms. She flies with the princess by a postern gate, leaving her child behind. Go Sankei makes a sally, and with one hundred men drives off several millions of the enemy. In his absence Ri Toten's younger brother, Ri Kaiho, murders the emperor, cuts off his head and binds Kwasei. Go Sankei returns, releases Kwasei and reverently sets up the emperor's headless trunk, which he adorns with the hereditary regalia. While he is hesitating whether to save the emperor's body or the pregnant consort, Kwasei, the enemy renew their attack. Having beaten them off, he resolves to save the unborn heir to the throne and to abandon the corpse.

Meanwhile his own infant child begins to cry for his natural nourishment. "What a nuisance!" he exclaims. But on second thought he reflects that the child is his own heir and that it would be on the whole better to save him. So he binds him firmly to the shaft of his spear and retreats to the seashore with Kwasei, pursued by the enemy. Kwasei is killed by a bullet, and Go Sankei, by an improvised Cesarean operation, rescues her living child, a beautiful boy, which he wraps in his dead mother's sleeve. "But stay! if the enemy find the child is gone, they will spare no pains to discover it." So he stabs his own child, who was all this time lashed to the shaft of his spear, and substitutes it for the infant prince.

Riuka, Go Sankei's wife, and the princess now hide among the reeds by the seashore. A Tartar officer, named Godatsu, follows in pursuit. He takes a small boat and searches all the creeks near them. Riuka catches his oar and overturns his boat. He goes to the bottom, and Riuka climbs into the boat with the princess. Godatsu comes up from below all dripping, and a combat ensues, in which his head is cut off by Riuka. Then, as in her bedraggled and blood-stained condition she is no fit company for a princess, she pushes off the boat containing the latter, which is carried away by the wind and tide, and remains behind on the shore. The chorus describes the situation in poetical imagery.

In Act II the scene changes to Japan. Kokusenyā, with his wife, is gathering shell-fish on the seashore when a small boat approaches. It proves to contain the princess, who had drifted over from China. Kokusenyā's wife, a low, vulgar woman, who provides the comic element of the play, is overcome with laughter at the Chinese which the princess and her husband talk. Jealousy then gets the upper hand, but this gives way to respect when she learns the rank of the stranger.

Kokusenyā, who is the son of a trusted minister of the Ming emperors, makes up his mind to restore that dynasty, and proceeds with his father and mother to China, leaving the princess in his wife's charge. On arriving there they resolve to seek the assistance of Kanki, a Chinese magnate who had married a sister of Kokusenyā. While travelling through a forest on their way to his castle, Kokusenyā bearing his aged mother on his back, they fall in with a tiger. Disdain-

ing to use his sword against the beast, Kokusunya gains the mastery over him after a struggle, which, doubtless, gave much gratification to the "groundlings" of the Osaka theatre. A hunting party arrives; their leader claims the tiger for Ri Toten, the traitorous one-eyed minister of the first act. Kokusunya replies in a style of inimitable braggadocio. With the tiger's assistance he subdues the huntsmen, and forms of them the nucleus of an army with which to conquer the Tartar invaders. Kokusunya's first care is to cut off the pig-tails of his recruits and to give them new names, in which Japanese terminations are appended to names indicative of their foreign origin.

In Act III Kokusunya, with his newly recruited force, arrives before Kanki's castle, but he is absent and they are refused admittance. The old mother, however, is permitted to enter in the guise of a prisoner bound with cords. Kanki returns. The old woman begs him earnestly to espouse her son Kokusunya's cause. He forthwith draws his sword and tries to kill his wife, but is prevented. He then explains that he has not suddenly gone mad, but that if he joined Kokusunya people would say he was influenced by women, so it was necessary to remove his wife as a preliminary to granting her request. His wife being still alive this was impossible.

News of this refusal being conveyed to Kokusunya, he bounds over the moat and parapet of the castle and presents himself before Kanki. After mutual defiance they prepare to fight, when Kanki's wife exposes her breast, showing that in order to remove all obstacles to the plans of her husband and brother she

has given herself a death-wound. The two then fraternize, and a quantity of warlike gear is produced, in which Kokusenyā is clad, his mother looking on with great admiration. She then commits suicide, enjoining on her son and Kanki to show no weakness in fighting against the Tartars, but to regard them as the enemies of mother and wife. She dies with a smile on her face, gazing at the gallant appearance of Kokusenyā in the new armour supplied him by Kanki.

Go Sankei, at the end of the first act, had retired to a secluded place among the hills with the heir to the Ming throne. Act IV opens with a Rip Van Winkle episode, at the end of which Go Sankei finds that the young prince has become a boy of seven, whose voice sounds to him "like the first song of the nightingale heard in some secluded valley where snow still lies." Kokusenyā's father now appears upon the scene, accompanied by Kokusenyā's wife and the princess, who have come over from Japan. While they are giving mutual explanations the enemy come in chase, but the gods being supplicated, a cloud issues from a cave and forms a bridge, over which they cross an abyss to the mountain on the other side. The enemy attempt to follow, but the bridge is blown away by a puff of wind. The five hundred foes tumble to the bottom and are dashed to pieces.

In the last act Kanki, Kokusenyā and Go Sankei hold a fruitless council of war. A letter arrives from Kokusenyā's father, stating that finding life at seventy-three not worth living, he is about to seek death in the enemy's ranks. The three, full of determination to

save him, rush off to Nanking, now the Tartar king's stronghold.

The scene changes to Nanking. Kokusunya's father appears before the gate and challenges Ri Toten to single combat. The Tartar king is seen on the battlements. By his order the old man is seized and brought into the city. Kokusunya and his party appear before the walls. Ri Toten tells Kokusunya that he must choose between his father committing suicide or their both going back to Japan. Kokusunya and his party are astounded. Kokusunya's father reminds him of his mother's dying injunctions and adjures him not to think of his fate. Kokusunya is about to spring at the Tartar king, but is deterred by Ri Toten putting his sword to the old man's throat. Go Sankei now throws himself at the feet of the Tartar king, offering to give Kokusunya if the lives of the other two were spared. No sooner has the king granted this request than Go Sankei springs at him, knocks him over and binds him. Kokusunya also rushes forward, releases his father and seizes Ri Toten. The Tartar king receives five hundred blows of a bamboo, and is sent off a prisoner to Japan. Ri Toten's head is wrenched off, and the play ends amid general rejoicing.

The above summary brings into too much prominence the defects of this, the most famous of Japanese dramas. Its manner is better than its matter. There is a copious flow of sonorous and often picturesque language, of exalted sentiment and sententious oratory, which divert attention from the improbabilities of the story. The personages do and say many absurd things; yet they



speak and bear themselves in a manner not altogether unworthy of tragic heroes. It may be added that Chikamatsu, even in his maddest moods, never neglects dramatic force of situation, and that he has a turn for impressive dialogue. His plays may be extravagant, but they are never dull.

The American reader is not likely to relish the more poetic passages, with their pivot-words and closely woven allusive phrases, yet there is more in them than we are willing to acknowledge. The Japanese find them the choicest part of the work, and they might not unreasonably deny to foreigners the right to sit in judgment upon the finer raptures of their national muse. As a poet Chikamatsu has at least one merit; if Japan ever produces epic, dramatic or long narrative poems of importance, he will have done much to prepare the way.

### Dramatic Themes.

The favorite themes of the drama are, for the most part, historical, but with the names of the characters changed. Among them may be mentioned the musical romance in which the popular story of *Chiushingura*, or *The Loyal League* has been amplified and adapted to theatrical representation, forming a narrative of the forty-seven *ronins*, who, at the close of the seventeenth century, revenged the wrongs of their chief upon the arrogant official to whom they were due. It is full of bloodshed and stirring incidents, among them a tea-house scene, which serves as a specimen of the Japanese comedy of manners. One part of this drama consists

of a metrical description, mainly in dialogue, of a journey which has to be performed on the stage. A more detailed description is given on a later page.

Other popular plays deal with similar themes, and there are domestic dramas of an extremely realistic and often highly improper character, though all intrigues against married women are excluded. There are also operas and ballets, with plenty of fairies and demons, to say nothing of farces, burlesques and intermezzos, forming an easy transition to the interludes of tumblers and jugglers. A little of everything is required to make up a Japanese entertainment, which lasts almost from sunrise to sunset, and the theatres borrow freely from each other, the lower sort of play-houses borrowing and mutilating at will from those of a higher class. Add to this the absence of any respectable element among the audience and it will be seen that the Japanese theatre is not in a very flourishing condition. As to scenery and properties it is, however, far in advance of the Chinese. Women were, until recently, excluded from the stage. The best actors are well paid and extremely popular among the lower classes, though excluded from good society, but their former disabilities have been removed.

### Popular Drama.

The eighteenth century was the flourished period of the Japanese popular drama. Nearly everything of note in this department of literature belongs to it. Chikamatsu, it is true, began his career somewhat earlier, but all his principal works date after 1700. Since the be-

ginning of the nineteenth century, on the other hand, the writing of *Joruri* has almost ceased.

### The Dramatist Idzumo.

Chikamatsu was succeeded by Takeda Idzumo, who wrote about the middle of the eighteenth century. Most, however, of the plays attributed to him were composed in collaboration with other writers, some being the work of as many as five or six authors. It seems to have been the usual practice at this time for playwrights to work together in this way. A committee having been formed, the proceedings began by the president giving out a subject. At a subsequent meeting each member offered his suggestions as to its treatment, and the work of composition went on in concert, nothing being accepted until it met with the general approval.

One of the best known works of Idzumo is an historical play of five acts, founded on the fortunes of Sugawara Michizane, a celebrated statesman of the ninth century, who was deified after his death as Tenman Tenjin, and is now worshiped as the god presiding over penmanship. It is entitled *History of the Transmission of the Art of Calligraphy by Sugawara*. The names of four authors appear on the title page.

A still more famous drama by Idzumo and two collaborators is the *Chiushingura*, or *Magazine of Faithful Retainers*. Chikamatsu's five-act arrangement was at this time no longer adhered to, and the *Chiushingura* has eleven acts or scenes. It is a version of the favorite story of the forty-seven ronins. There are no fewer

than forty or fifty plays on this subject, some of them, however, being mere adaptations of previous works.

In their general character Idzumo's plays greatly resemble those of his predecessor. There is the same overcrowding of exciting incidents, the same mixture of comedy and tragedy and the same desire to shock the audience with brutal murders and other enormities enacted on the stage, and to pander to their lewder tastes. Yet Idzumo is in some respects to be preferred to his more famous master. The improbabilities are not so startling, the personages are nearer to ordinary humanity, and their sentiments are less unnatural and less stilted in their expression.

Idzumo died in 1756. He was followed, as playwright for the Takemoto Theatre, by Chikamatsu Hanni, who did his best to attract audiences by startling novelties and spectacular effect. He reduced the share given to poetical narrative and depended more on dialogue. But in his hands the *Joruri* declined sensibly. The public got tired of it, the Takemoto Theatre went into bankruptcy, and after the end of the century this kind of drama became practically extinct.

#### Tsubouchi.

Tsubouchi, already mentioned as a novelist and critic, has also tried his hand at drama. His *Julius Cæsar* is a version of Shakespeare's drama thrown into the form of *Joruri*, that is, with a thread of poetical narrative and descriptions woven into it. His *Maki no Kata*, published in 1897, depends almost wholly on

dialogue. The small element of *Joruri* which it contains is limited to one of its seven acts. This play is one of a trilogy which deals with the history of the Hojo regents. The time is the beginning of the thirteenth century, and the subject the crimes and intrigues into which Maki no Kata, the wife of the regent, was led by her ambitions on behalf of a favorite son. The *Maki no Kata* is decidedly melodramatic. There are several murders and bloody combats and two suicides by women. But there are also some really forcible scenes, and although no supreme height of excellence is anywhere attained, there is careful workmanship and a gratifying freedom from the extravagances of the earlier school of Japanese dramatists.

In his interesting history of the drama, the Japanese critic Genichiro says: "From the era of Keian to that of Tenwa, 1648-1683, in Yedo, now Tokio, boldness, activity and gayety in the drama were the characteristics which procured popularity; while in Kyota and Osaka the popular plays have as their chief feature tragedy, with its sadness and pain. That these communities had different tastes arose from the fact that the former had maintained its chivalrous and knightly temper, while the latter was rich in the civil and literary spirit. In these three great cities of Japan noted actors appeared at this time in great numbers and vied with each other in zeal for their art. Accordingly dramas found able composers and plays greatly improved. But during the era of Tenwa the ordinance prohibiting the wearing of swords at theatres checked the progress of the drama." To this may be found a parallel in the French theatres of

the days of Molière, when it was found necessary by the authorities to issue a similar prohibition.

### Degeneration of the Drama.

The reason for the degeneration of the Japanese drama has generally been attributed to this apparently harmless ordinance. The effect of the order that the samurai, or aristocracy, should not wear their swords at the theatre prevented this class of people from attending, because no samurai would lay aside his sword and thus, even for the time being, become one of the common people. The managers of the theatres, who had been annoyed by their swagger, at first rejoiced over the exclusion of these aristocrats, whose quarrels and manners often caused trouble and bloodshed; but, in the long run, its effect seems to have lowered the standard of Japanese play-houses. The managers were able to maintain order, but the theatres soon lost caste, and, in consequence, vulgarity crept in and plays and performers deteriorated. As a result, we are informed that, while the plays were occasionally historical and worth seeing, the distinguishing features were to be found in social plays, a large majority of which dwelt upon the amorous affairs of men addicted to carousing and fighting, and in which the Yoshiwara and tea-houses, with the geisha girls, seemed to figure largely. In fact, to quote from Genichiro: "The theatre in Japan thus reached the lowest depth of vulgarity, and so continued till the last year of the Tokugawa Shogunate, in 1867."

The plots of the plays during this period of decadence

were of the most tragic character. The favorite themes were the subjugation of banditti, conspiracy, duels, vendetta, assassination, death on the field of battle, quarrels, hara-kiri, the remission of the death penalty, executions, suicides, death on account of love and other blood-curdling and sanguinary episodes. Indeed, it seems that almost every play witnessed in Japan turned on one or more of such incidents.

When asked whether he thought European plays would suit the Japanese, Geniehiro replied that he believed *Hamlet*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth* could be adapted for their stage. He had himself once tried to adapt *Hamlet* to the Japanese theatre, but frankly confessed his failure. "There are many beautiful points of sentiment in a play like *Hamlet*," said he, "that would be entirely lost on a Japanese audience. In time we may educate our people to an appreciation of such plays, but the mind of our average theatre-goer could not comprehend the beauties of Shakespeare." In fact, the cultured classes of Japan have never patronized the drama and do not, to any great extent, to-day. They amuse themselves in other ways. No matter how good the play, how clever the actors, educated and fashionable people will not go to the theatre.

In olden times the governing classes of the empire looked upon the stage as a means of giving the lower classes moral instruction in what they chose to call principles of loyalty, filial piety, fidelity and justice. The true meaning of this was the inculcation of a feudal obedience to their superiors. Mixed up with much that was immoral, vulgar and bad, may be found

illustrated the idea that any crime is justifiable in order to show loyalty to your daimio, or liege lord. Hence a favorite plot is the sacrifice of one's own child to advance the interests or save the life of the ruler of a province. Such a crime, with a purpose of this sort in view, as the murder by the father's own hands of his favorite son, or even of a man's wife, would be entirely justifiable. To commit similar crimes at the bidding of parents would also be in accordance with these extravagant and exaggerated notions of loyalty. The voluntary retirement of a daughter to the Yoshiwara, to help indigent parents, is supposed to be a noble trait and would be applauded even to this day by a Japanese audience in a second-class theatre.

It is claimed by Japanese historians that, while the samurai class were permitted to attend dramatic performances, these ideas were less prevalent, and that none of the cruelties already described were seen on the stage. In short, the theatres degenerated into places of amusement for the lower classes, and the standard was gradually lowered until, as Geniehiro says, "meekness came to be mistaken for weakness, violence for courage, cruelty for clear-sightedness, and charity for want of courage; in short, the plays ran wild, beyond the borders of human thought and feeling." In fact, the central idea seems to be loyalty and faithfulness, which were regarded as cardinal virtues, to practice which any crime whatsoever was justifiable, and the legal punishment that was incurred in consequence came to be looked upon not only as no disgrace, but as honorable and commendable. One of the first things necessary to improve the Japanese



drama is to purge it of the cruel and inhuman events with which it abounds.

### *Actresses.*

Woman has played a curious and somewhat fitful part in the drama of Japan. When the bard of Avon was writing the greatest plays the world has ever known, there appeared in the province of Idzumo a beautiful dancing girl named Okuni, who not only greatly improved her art, but created a new era in the Japanese drama. When about twenty years of age Okuni left Idzumo for Kioto, and there wrote a number of pieces, and surrounding herself by clever actors played comedies which left their impress upon the Japanese stage. According to tradition, Okuni is represented with her hair in wild confusion, a golden crown upon her head and arrayed in embroidered garments of exquisite beauty. She is also said to have worn the priest's robe with a kamogane and a rosary of crystals hanging from her neck. Again it is related that she clothed herself in elegant male attire, and wore a pair of swords of fine make and a set of miniature boxes in her girdle. The works of this remarkable woman were historical and romantic, and they are known to this day as Okuni-kabuki—the plays of Okuni. Their performance became very popular, not only in Kioto, but in other large cities, Okuni increasing the variety in the art as well as the plot of the play. In fact, those who have studied the history of the Japanese drama declare that the school of activity started by the beautiful and accom-

plished Okuni, of Idzumo, did much to develop some of the best features of Japanese histrionic art.

Two centuries ago most of the performers and all of those best known to fame were women; men in those days being only allotted secondary parts. The enemies of womankind, however, were able to secure an interdict; from 1644 to 1881 the public appearance of women on the stage was forbidden, and men were substituted for them, those who thus personated women being called "onnagata." It is almost impossible for Europeans to tell them from women, so perfectly are they trained, and this will be seen from a glance at the most famous onnagata. Women are now, though slowly, returning to the stage, and at the theatre in Tokio all the performers are women, Yone-hachi being the leading lady. Danjuro, the leading actor, is in favor of women taking parts on the stage with men, and encourages it in his own theatre whenever he finds a woman capable of acting. When the theatre is small they do very well, but there are physical objections in large theatres to the employment of women. The Japanese woman, both through heredity and training, walks with contracted chest and a lily-like droop of the head, not unpleasing to the eye, but fatal to the proper use of the voice, which never carries beyond the first rows. Great physical endurance is also necessary. Tests by the pedometer tell that chief actors walk every day from twelve to twenty miles on the stage, while the strongest Japanese woman, when submitted to the test, could hardly exceed five. This is largely due to their inconvenient dress and the habit of turning in their toes.

Such is the Japanese drama, past and present. Originating centuries ago in the religious rites and mythology of this remarkable people, coupled with dancing, with song and with the music of stringed instruments and the beating of tom-toms and wooden sounding-boards, it has progressed and developed until we find it to-day full of fascination and interest, though capable of great improvement. It has passed through many vicissitudes, and now that the highest nobles can visit the theatre without disgrace and the emperor himself sends for the greatest actors to perform in his presence, it is being restored to its proper place, and already contains much that is beautiful and excellent. Not only are there good actors and actresses in Japan, but there is abundant material for plays to be derived from Japanese mythology, history, war records, without resorting to inhuman crimes, revolting realism or disgusting vulgarity. The Japanese are very fond of statistics, and, as we know, are an exact people. They have an old tradition that sums up a man's character in ten parts. If seven parts are good and three bad, the good must predominate and the bad be buried with his bones; if the reverse, then the good goes to the grave with his ashes, and in history the man ranks as all bad. Applying this formula to the native drama we may safely say that seven parts of it are good, and if those responsible for it would bury the remaining three, or dispose of them in some other effective way, the result would be a great improvement and a much more brilliant future. Nevertheless, we find in the dramatic, as in the other art of this progressive people, much that is good in performance and more

that is excellent in promise. And so it is with their mechanic arts and with their education.

### Realism.

The Japanese seem to admire the realistic in drama as in art. The murmur of the populace as the heavy villain is led to execution, and the hoisting of the flag as the body swings into eternity, or as the head drops into the saw-dust, would not satisfy the average Japanese theatre-goer. The smothering of the victim behind the curtains, the startling intelligence that the hero had shot himself in his bed-room, or the heroine had taken poison at daybreak, would simply fall flat with the audiences of Tokio, Osaka and Kioto. Heads trickling with gore, men committing hara-kiri, with every detail, and all other deadly crimes, including such incidents as the castigation or torture of witnesses, are performed in front of the audience. Though the Japanese drama had its origin many centuries ago, first in song and *saru-gaku*, or monkey music, and then in comedy, its leading dramatic author, Genichiro, frankly admits that "the place for recreation has been turned into something not much different from the infernal regions." In the early days of the drama red cotton or paper took the place of the victim's blood; now, blood-like liquids, and what is called paste crimson, for representing the shedding of blood, is commonly used, especially in the second-class theatres. Scenes of torture and even of crucifixion are frightfully realistic. Though tragedy and pain are too often the themes of the far Eastern stage, the

theatre in Japan is nevertheless improving in tone, and the influence of such men as Genichiro, and the great actor Danjuro, has of late years all been in the direction of elevating the drama.

The most remarkable feature of Japanese drama still remains, however, its intense realism. Nothing is left to the imagination. If an actor enters from the rain, his umbrella and clogs are wet. If he falls into the water, the fact is made evident by his soaked and dripping condition. Worthy of special mention is a scene at the Shintomiza theatre in Tokio, which recently held the audience spell-bound for many minutes at a time, natives and foreigners alike, and yet for most of the time there was no one visible on the stage and no change of setting.

It was a swamp. In the foreground was a small tumble-down hut of temporary make, containing a tripod of sticks with a suspended kettle over a spent fire. Here and there were evidences of recent human presence—a bucket of water, a dipper, a bowl of rice. The rest of the stage was filled to its full depth with the real rushes found in the native swamps, standing upright, and with reeds, trees and grass, all real also. Perfect silence reigned, which became almost painful in its intensity. Then a distant frog croaked and was answered from another part of the marsh. This was several times repeated with wonderful imitation of reality. The leaves of the farther trees rustled as they were shaken in the wind, and the nearer rushes swayed before it. Then far-off was heard the cry of a bird whose note betokens rain. Nearer and nearer came the sound,

and the birds, flying swiftly, crossed the stage like a flash, low, almost among the waving reeds. A slow darkening, a few puffs of wind, a rustle of the reeds and leaves, and patter, patter came the rain drops, water unmistakable, pouring and splashing down between the audience and the dim gray back-ground. A woman entered with dripping umbrella and high-tucked kimono, followed soon after by a man with drawn knife. Then the attack, the struggle and the disappearance of both into the swamp. Then the awful death-hunt in and about and among the rushes, the position only indicated by the reeds, which bent and swayed and hid all but the fierce sounds of the hidden fight for life, the thud of a blow, the terrible gurgles of death, followed by the splash, splash of an artery as it ebbed away a life. The fearful realism of the whole scene and its consummate art were indescribable.

Yet mixed up with this most unreal acting we find most absurd conventionalities. When a combatant is supposed to be killed in battle, it is en règle for him to turn a somersault as he expires. Children never speak in a natural voice, always in piping monotone. On every stage the prompter is a crouching figure hooded and in black, who is supposed to be invisible and is called the *kurombo*, or black-man. It is almost impossible for a Japanese actor to portray grief and passion naturally. A woman will exhibit indescribable grief in a most ridiculous manner, while a man shows self-control by contortions and grimaces, and lest these should be lost upon the audience, a lighted candle is held on the end of a stick close to the performer's face that

none of the facial expression may be missed. Such are a few of the oddities of the stage, which strike foreigners as absurd.

### **The Dramatist Genichiro and the Actor Danjuro.**

The greatest among living dramatists is Genichiro, the "peerless dramatist, whose compositions are performed at the largest and most refined theatre," and the "highest living authority" on all that appertains to the Japanese stage. Says one who visited him in 1896: "I found the great 'drama-author,' as he calls himself, not only well versed in Chinese and Japanese stage mythology, with a genealogical table of the Japanese drama at his finger ends, but I likewise discovered that he had a clear conception of both the French and the English theatre. Speaking and reading these languages, having studied the European theatre, and heard many of the greatest actors, including Booth and Irving, Genichiro may be said to possess peculiar qualifications for improving the Japanese stage without absolutely Europeanizing it. To aid him in this work he has Hori Koshi Suguru, or Danjuro, as he is known on the boards, the greatest actor in Japan, and the ninth descendant of the original Danjuro, who came to Tokio about A. D. 1600. By far the best dramatic presentations are the direct results of the labors of these two men. The one is undoubtedly a great play-writer, from the Japanese point of view, and the other not only 'the chief actor of Japan,' as his visiting card states, but one of the greatest actors in the world. While Danjuro acts in both the

leading theatres of Tokio, the efforts of Genichiro are largely confined to the furnishing of suitable plays for the Kabukiza, with which both he and the great actor are closely identified.

"Danjuro is undoubtedly the ninth direct descendant of his famous ancestor, who, more than any other one man, lifted the dramatic profession out of the disreputable condition in which it was at the beginning of the seventeenth century. I have the Danjuro family tree on a diagram drawn for me by the great actor's own playwright and friend, Genichiro. It appears from it that the second and third Danjuro were direct male descendants; that the fourth Danjuro was the son of a daughter of the second Danjuro, who married an actor. Then came the fifth and sixth Danjuros, in direct male succession, but the seventh Danjuro was the son of the daughter of the fifth Danjuro, who married a man in private life. The seventh Danjuro had two sons—one, the eighth Danjuro, who died by his own hand in Osaka thirty years ago, and was succeeded by his brother, the present and ninth Danjuro. The surviving actor must be nearly seventy years of age. He has no son, but two charming young daughters, who dress bewitchingly, bow down to the floor most gracefully, lisp a few pretty compliments in exquisitely broken English, and dance divinely.

"Danjuro lives in a commodious house in the theatrical quarter of Tokio. It must be remembered that only of late years has the drama been partially recognized as a respectable occupation, and it is not now in such high esteem as in Europe or America. Danjuro is the only



Japanese actor ever invited to play before the emperor. This he did about ten years ago, and he is prouder of the incident than of all his other achievements. His daughters told me that they observed the annual date of that event as an anniversary, and the tenth anniversary, which took place in June, 1895, was celebrated with important ceremonies and festivities in the Danjuro household. About the only item of European theatrical gossip which interested Danjuro was the fact that Henry Irving, the great English actor, had been knighted by the queen of England. Beyond that fact, the European-American stage was as much a myth to Danjuro as the Japanese-Chinese stage would be to us. There was a time, he told me, when he would have enjoyed a trip to Europe. He had once acted with a Russian actress and had been invited to go to St. Petersburg. Not accepting this, he was now too old, and his health was not good enough to undertake such a change and the excitement of such a journey. He had heard much of America, and was glad to meet American friends, but he would never be able to see our great country.

"General Grant, he said, had honored him by attending his theatre, and among his cherished souvenirs was a beautiful silk stage curtain given him by the great American soldier. The famous actor spoke hopefully of the future of dramatic art in Japan. He believes it can be greatly improved, and is doing what is possible to elevate the taste of the theatre-goer. His invitation to perform before the emperor, Danjuro regarded as a good omen, for such a command had, up to that time, been unheard of in the history of the Japanese stage.

"I was favored with an autograph note from the great actor, inviting me to his house, and also one from Madame Ichi Kawaga, the leading actress of Japan and head of the theatre in which the performers are all women. Both are interesting specimens of Japanese chirography. The interviews which followed the receipt of these polite notes were full of novelty and interest. In the case of Danjuro, after the usual greetings by the servants at the entrance and taking off my shoes, I was asked into a large room, one side of which opened upon a clear pond, in which handsome tame ducks and waterfowl splashed and disported themselves. The garden and grotto work were thoroughly Japanese, and added much to the pleasure of the occasion. One end of the room contained a sort of shrine, where a religious ceremony had been conducted—perhaps the shrine of the actor's ancestors, or possibly some form of celebrating a festival. Velvet cushions and a charcoal box to warm our hands were first brought; then tobacco and pipes. Danjuro appeared, made a profound bow, and seated himself upon his heels on a tatami mat, near the center of the room. Our pipes were lighted, and green tea in tiny cups of rare cloisonné was handed around, followed by sweetmeats of brilliant hues. After we had talked an hour, small tables were placed in front of each guest, on which was clear soup in lacquer bowls, omelet and fish, cooked deliciously; more tea and confections of all kinds; next, small oranges, peeled and divided. Then we partook of saké, poured out by the delicate hands of the host's daughters. Captivating smiles, with innumerable blushes, marked this part of the ceremony.

"Madame Yonehachi, in her invitation to see her play, says: 'We shall begin at nine and continue until six in the evening.' Here we have a feature of the Japanese drama that would hardly suit Europeans. Yet Danjuro practically acts each day during the season or life of a play from ten in the morning until dusk in the evening—that is, he is on and off the stage during that time. Though his hours are longer, he is not subject to the same amount of strain that an European actor, taking a leading part would undergo from eight till eleven in the evening. The movement is slower, some plays lasting all day, the situations far apart, while the climax and dialogues dawdle along in truly oriental fashion. Why be in a hurry? The Japanese comes to the theatre expecting to stay. Between the acts innumerable swift-footed waiters of both sexes noiselessly run around with luncheon, tea, beer and cigarettes, all of which are served in tiny boxes, which hold from four to six people. To watch the occupants of these boxes is half the fun of the Japanese theatre. The serious-looking, sallow-complexioned men, in their sombre, bluish-gray gowns, form a decided contrast to the gay little butterflies, in the brightest and most picturesque of costumes, fluttering at their side. And the coiffure of the latter, black as shining anthracite, decorated with dangling blossoms, and built up with such exquisite skill that the height and dimensions are nothing short of alarming to the uninitiated. Yet, like the modern skyscrapers, they do not seem to fall down. The family parties at the Japanese theatres are brimful of jollity. In fact, good nature and fun reign supreme between the

acts, but the signal for the play to begin brings the audience, especially the women, trotting back again. In they come from the several doors, noiselessly pattering along the highly-polished 'flowery ways,' over which the actors are soon to tread, into the little four-by-four boxes, where they sink down upon their heels, prepared to give undivided attention to the measured action of the play."

### *Peculiar Features of Japanese Drama.*

Strange and odd as the performers and audience seem at first, upon becoming more familiar with the Japanese theatre we readily appreciate the excellent quality of much of the acting and the consummate skill displayed in the stage effects. True, the methods are different to ours. Thus, for example, the entrances and exits of the actors through the audience, strike the uninitiated as peculiar and, with other curious differences, have the effect of distracting the mind from the acting; but when we are used to these unusual proceedings, its fine quality becomes apparent. Danjuro is one of the most remarkable of actors, well worthy of comparison with Irving, Booth and Salvini. His range of characters seems even greater than that of his illustrious European contemporaries, including, as it does, not only youth and age, priest and soldier, acrobat and schoolmaster, but the impersonation of female parts, which Danjuro renders with consummate skill. To-day he appears as a handsome, dashing warrior, flashing a sword, on horse-back; to-morrow as a devout priest, with shaven head. His make-up is simply perfect. A powerful and spiritual

princess in one play, he astonishes you with his royal yet feminine bearing, and in another thrills you as the chief character in the magnificent attire of a courtesan.

Japanese plays are not infrequently laid in the Yoshiwara, as is one of the most gorgeous of their spectacular dramas by Genichiro, in which Danjuro takes the leading part. The costumes are superb and their cost, even in Japan, must have been enormous. The procession, as the leading characters slowly pass through the audience on the "flowery way," or elevated walk running from the stage to the front of the theatre, suggests the stately cavalcade at the coronation of an Eastern potentate rather than the annual cherry-blossom festivals of the Yoshiwara. This mode of entrance for a man of Danjuro's age involves a marvellous specimen of acrobatic acting. Clad in magnificent stuffs, stiff with embroidery of gold and cascades of crystals, and wearing high wooden shoes, resembling short stilts, but without firm bracing, he advances, describing first with his right and then with his left foot a complete semi-circle, forming the figure eight, as a skater does on the ice. We have numerous descriptions of the real cherry-blossom festival, as formerly witnessed in the Yoshiwara; but for costly gorgeousness and rich costumes, the procession as put on the stage of Danjuro's theatre, with the old actor in the rôle of the most beautiful woman, certainly surpasses, in bewildering effect, any of these accounts.

The theatres are supported by the middle and lower classes, who go with their whole families. The audience is attentive, enthusiastic, quick to perceive the fine points, very sympathetic and easily moved to tears. It

is no uncommon thing to see two-thirds of the people, men and women alike, stirred by some pathetic scene into weeping uncontrollable, while sobs and sniffles are heard all over the house. Applause by clapping of the hands is sometimes heard, but it is a modern innovation. The native manner is to shout the actor's name or nickname, or by cries of "Ten riyo," or "A hundred riyo," or "A thousand riyo" (a riyo is about seventy-five cents), according to the enthusiasm of the crier.

The popular plays, as already mentioned, are generally founded on some of the many romantic tales or historical deeds of the days of feudal Japan. Some are based on the innumerable fox legends, the fox figuring largely in the folk-lore of the country, and being endowed by the superstitious with the power of metamorphosis and of entering the bodies of men, and, in its changed condition, of working endless woes on the bewitched individual. Many plays have for their motive some every-day scene of domestic life.

### **The Loyal League.**

Probably the most popular drama on the Japanese stage is the *Chiushingura*, or *The Loyal League*, founded on the well-known story of the forty-seven ronins. Of this the people seem never to tire, and whenever it is presented it always draws crowded houses.

The play commences with a quarrel between a mighty lord, Moronaho, and a lesser daimio, or noble, Yencya. The latter, driven to desperation by the overbearing conduct and insults of his superior, draws his

sword and wounds him within the precincts of the royal palace. For this unpardonable offense Yenya is condemned to take his own life by hara-kiri. The scene of this is most thrilling. Two samurai enter to announce his doom, and at almost the same moment Yenya comes in at the back and greets them. A few words pass and one of the samurai reads the decree of death. The preparations for the solemn ceremony are now made with all that nicety which is characteristic of the rite, and no jot of which is omitted in the stage counterfeit. Two straw mats are placed side by side upon the floor, and are covered with a cloth of spotless white. At the corners are little tubes of wood with sprigs of green bamboo therein. When all is ready Yenya kneels on the mats and slipping his arms from the ample sleeves of his white garment leaves himself nude to the waist. Before him, on a low stand of unpainted wood, and wrapped to the point in paper, is placed the short-bladed knife with which the deed is to be done. This Yenya takes in his right hand, and raising it reverently to his head, calls upon those present to witness his obedience. He places the left hand over the right, and pointing the blade inward, plunges it into the abdomen on the left side and with one cut to the right disembowels himself. At that moment, all disordered and dust-covered, in rushes his absent karo, or counsellor, Yuranosuke, who throws himself on the floor in front of his beloved master to receive his dying words. Yenya says gaspingly: "Take this knife—my last gift—exact vengeance." Then slowly, and with painful effort, he draws the bloody blade from his wound, hands it to his faithful retainer, and falls face

downward, dead. It is a piteous scene, acted with all the circumspection and solemn etiquette which for centuries has been the accompaniment of the *hara-kiri*. The realism of its bloody and repulsive details is terrible.

With his life Yenya forfeits all his property. His followers are scattered, but forty-seven of them, under the leadership of Yuranosuke, swear to avenge their master's wrongs. This conspiracy is the motive of the *Chiushingura*.

After Yenya's death and the confiscation of his castle, his followers, named *ronins*, or wave-men, are again scattered, and Yuranosuke goes to Kyoto to carry on his schemes in that gay capital, living at the *Ichi Riki* tea-house, where he leads a life of drunkenness and gayety, the better to deceive his enemy and conceal his design.

The next scene is in one of the rooms of this famous resort. The mats are covered with a bevy of girls, dancing and singing while clapping hands in unison to the music. Into this gay throng staggers the drunken Yuranosuke. He is quickly surrounded by the tea-house girls, who bandage his eyes and make him the *ono* of a game of blindman's buff. He is poked and pulled, as he rolls from place to place, endeavoring in vain to catch the girls who flit about like butterflies. Suddenly the revelry is hushed by the entrance of three solemn-looking *ronins*, seeking their drunken leader, for even they are deceived by his pretended dissipation. Yuranosuke seizes the nearest of his followers and calls for the forfeit, whilst the disgusted samurai holds his sword out of reach of the wandering fingers. Yuranosuke soon finds out his mistake, and tears off his bandage with a



deeply muttered oath; but when they talk of attacking Moronaho and of vengeance, he laughs at them, becomes apparently more besotted than ever, and at last falls asleep in their presence. Thus they leave him.

He is awakened by his son, who brings him a letter from the North. Its delivery is seen by the watchful spy, Kudaiu, a retainer of Moronaho, sent to Kioto to observe the doings of the conspirators. Kudaiu sups with Yuranosuke, and, when the latter leaves the room for a minute, hides himself under the veranda in the hope of learning the contents of the letter. Yuranosuke, on his return, finding Kudaiu gone, looks about for a safe place in which to read his missive. He stands at last beneath the hanging lantern on the veranda, and, as he reads, unrolls the lengthy scroll. A few minutes later Karu, one of the tea-house girls, coming to an adjoining window, beholds the quiet figure. Consumed with curiosity, she procures a mirror, and, seating herself with her back to the lantern, holds up the bright metal and reads the written words reflected on its polished surface. Meanwhile Yuranosuke is all intent upon the letter, and, as it unrolls, its fluttering end falls to the ground. Kudaiu crawls toward it and just as he tears off a portion, one of Karu's hair-pins drops with a resonant ring to the pavement below. As Yuranosuke quickly rolls up the paper and thrusts it behind him, he notices its jagged end, and Kudaiu's absence is explained. He seizes a sword, plunges it down through a crack in the veranda, and pierces the spy below in the back. The wretch is dragged out and dispatched.

This is one of the most stirring episodes in the play,

and rarely has been seen a finer piece of acting than Danjuro's rendering of the character of Yuranosuke. His delineation of pretended besottedness, covering the keen alertness of a man in whom every sense is active, who is under the necessity of deceiving his rollicking companions, the spies about him, and even his fellow-conspirators, is wonderful, judged even by western standards.

The next act is laid in Yuranosuke's house at Yamashima. Honzo, who prevented Yenya from following up his first blow and killing Moronaho, is on the floor dying from a wound received from Rikiya, Yuranosuke's son. Honzo tells his hearers that he has sought this death as an atonement for his error in so interfering, and in hope that his expiation will remove the obstacles that would prevent the betrothal of his daughter to Rikiya.

"Honzo," says Yuranosuke to him, "we have been taught that the just man hates the crime and not the criminal. It is true we did hold a grudge against you; but now, as you are not long for this world, I will show you my most secret thought," and, stepping back, he pushes aside the screens and reveals to the dying man two tombs of snow.

Tonase, Honzo's wife, with her woman's instinct, understands. "Ah!" she cries, "they will slay their chief's enemy, but will serve no second master. They will perish as yonder snow must perish, rather than prove disloyal to the memory of Yenya."

The plan of the attack is then explained, and Honzo, expressing his delight at its completeness, draws from the folds of his gown a piece of paper and hands it to

Rikiya, saying that it is a list of wedding gifts. It is in realty a plan of Moronaho's castle, the one thing needed to give action to the conspiracy.

Several acts follow this, leading up to the last, which is a realistic storming of the stronghold of the league's enemy. After a long and bloody fight and a diligent search, Moronaho is discovered in a charcoal-house, and a dark lantern flashed upon his face reveals his identity. He is dispatched with the knife with which Yenza committed hara-kiri, and vengeance is accomplished.

This is the barest outline of a drama too long to be presented in its entirety in a single day. A vein of fun and a strain of love, with an intermixture of different stories, all more or less connected with the play, give color to its rendering and have the effect of toning down its more sombre scenes.

The play is founded on historical facts, upon which has been grafted enough fiction to make up the romantic story. The events occurred early in the eighteenth century; the quarrel in the palace, the hara-kiri, the plotting, the revenge, took place as told in the play, and the vengeance was accomplished on the 30th of January, 1703. The fame of the doughty deeds of the forty-seven spread far and wide. The slain enemy of the clan was a man of high rank, but the popular sympathy was with the conspirators, who were finally permitted to inflict upon themselves a glorious death by hara-kiri.

The devoted clansmen were buried, grouped around the grave of their beloved master, in the grounds of the temple of Sengaku in Shinagawa, an outskirt of the Japanese capital. It is a place of reverent pilgrimage,

and is visited by thousands annually. Some of the relics of the loyal band are still shown. The knife with which their lord committed his "Happy Dispatch" is there, also the receipt from the relatives for the head of their hated enemy, which was delivered after it had been laid upon the grave of the master. Parts of the coats-of-mail and remnants of clothing are sacredly kept, and in one of the houses in the grounds are the effigies of the ronins, dressed in the conventional suits of white and black.

#### *Foreigners' Impressions of the Japanese Theatre.*

Of all the varied phases of the strange life that passes before the visitor to Japan, none is more interesting or more fully repays study than the theatre. So competent an observer as Percival Lowell says, after tracing the evolution of the theatre in far-Eastern countries: "In Japan the result has been one of the finest stages the world has produced. In fact, it is not going too far to rank the Shintomiza, the great theatre of Tokio, as but little inferior to the Théâtre Français." It is somewhat remarkable that this subject should have received so little attention from the writers of the many books about Japan. Generally their accounts are limited to descriptions of the audience, and when they come to speak of the stage they confine their observations almost entirely to ridiculing the really absurd conventions of the native drama, or pass over it in a superficial way.

The tide of Western civilization, which has risen so high in modern Japan, has swept away all that curious mediæval life which the shallow accounts of travellers

and the more exact researches of Orientalists have as yet only imperfectly revealed to us; but the spirit of the feudal chivalry, the ceremonious etiquette, the bloody hara-kiri, and all the brilliant color of that ancient life, are still preserved, in mimic picture, in that great store-house of all that is romantic in the story of old Japan—the stage. From among the common-places of the life of the modern capital one turns with feelings of relief to its spirited drama, to study there the curious customs and superstitions of olden time.

### *Modern Japanese Theatres.*

The theatre buildings are generally of flimsy, barn-like construction, for the frequency and devastation of the great fires make substantial buildings a poor investment. In the interior the main floor is divided, like a great chess-board, into innumerable squares; there is a revolving stage, much like a locomotive turntable, on which two scenes may be set back-to-back, and there are raised ways which lead through either side of the auditorium to the stage. Travellers supposed to be coming from a distance, or drawn in a jinrikisha, or entering in great haste, or when pursued, all come to the stage from the back of the auditorium along the flower paths. Here is the scene of prolonged discussion and combats, and armed bands, approaching to make an assault or engage in battle, proceed by it to the stage. At the outer gate, in the rear of the auditorium, knocking is often heard, and animated conversations take place there as well as on the stage.

The curtain runs on guiding strings to either side of the stage. It is generally of silk, and frequently belongs to the star—a gift from his admirers. Elaborate stage settings with mechanical accessories are unknown. The scenery is always well-fitted to the play, but occasionally it is likely to shock one's sense of proportion, for it is sometimes quite diminutive, though houses and rooms are of the usual size. In costuming, the Japanese stage has no superior. The closest attention is paid to this branch of the art, and dresses are scrupulously faithful to their originals as regards time, place and condition. There only can now be seen those beautiful and gorgeous habiliments which were part of the real life of old Japan, and which are faithfully and accurately produced on its modern stage. Sometimes these dresses are heirlooms, hundreds of years old and of priceless value, while the skill of the Japanese actor in "making-up" is nowhere excelled. Though actors have in these later days won reputation and social recognition, they were rated very low in society in the olden time.

#### IV.

##### Hindoo Drama and Literature.

Two hundred years ago Europeans regarded with feelings of wonder and awe the vast empire that extended from the heights of the Himalaya to Cape Comorin, the once mysterious regions,

Where the gorgeous East  
Showered o'er her kings barbaric pearls and gold.

Here were the realms of sovereigns who sat on ivory thrones, rode abroad among a thousand elephants, and seemed to realize all the marvels of the *Arabian Nights*. All this vast territory, now parcelled into presidencies, where the British government issues its mandates to as many nations as did the great king of Israel, is strewn with the wrecks of mighty monarchies and with the moldering monuments of religions whose origin is lost in the depths of by-gone ages. Here are the remnants of a civilization, compared with which our own is but of yesterday, stretching far beyond the reach of historic record, the traces of religions which have influenced the fate of more human beings than are now living on the face of the earth, while, according to recent estimates,

the followers of Buddha and Brahma still outnumber all Christian sects combined.

### Ancient India.

To those who delight in studying the history of man, there can be nothing more fascinating than the civil, religious and literary history of this remarkable group of nations, since their monuments have been more thoroughly explored and their writings made known through the research of such European scholars as Horace Wilson and Sir William Jones. Many are the curious and inexplicable secrets that have come to light from a closer acquaintance with a language which has proved to be strongly allied with the Persian, the Greek, the Latin and even Teutonic tongues; from the discovery of the great pantheistic system of religion which comprehended almost the whole of Asia and Egypt. Much has been learned from the laws and civil polity of a people whose castes have remained unaltered since the days of Alexander the Great, from a philosophy which, like that of Greece and modern Europe, has passed through every gradation of idealism, materialism, skepticism and eclecticism. So also with poetry, which, however, encumbered with fable and mythology, abounds in passages of striking grandeur, of the most exquisite delicacy and tenderness, of infinite variety and gracefulness of fancy, and also of the purest simplicity.

In this great empire of Southern Asia, containing half the area of the United States and with four times its



population, there is but a feeble interest except among a handful of Oriental scholars, though the country is full of wonders greater than any recorded in the annals of ancient or modern nations. Its records extend far back to the twilight of history, long antedating the dawn of Greek civilization.

### Races of India.

At the dawn of Hindoo history we find here two races struggling for the possession of the soil. One was a fair-skinned people, who had recently entered by the North-western passes, of Aryan lineage, speaking a stately language and worshipping powerful gods. The other was a race of a lower type, which had long dwelt in the land, but which the lordly new-comers drove before them into the mountains, or reduced to servitude on the plains. The pure descendants of these two races are less than twenty millions for each, and it is of their mixed progeny, sprung chiefly from the ruder stock, that the masses of the people are composed.

The conquered tribes were an obscure people, who in the absence of a race-name of their own, may be called non-Aryans, or aborigines. They have left no written records, for the use of letters or even of hieroglyphics was unknown to them. All that has come down to us from the work of their hands is the rude stone circles and mounds, beneath which they buried their dead. We know also that they had learned how to make pots of hard, thin earthenware, that they fought with iron weapons and wore ornaments of copper and gold. They were also acquainted with the use of money. In the

upper soils of large areas, earlier remains show that these ancient tomb-builders formed but one link in a chain of primeval races. Long before their advent India was peopled by tribes unacquainted with the metals, who hunted and made war with polished flint axes and implements of stone, similar to those unearthed in Europe and America. Even these were the successors of yet ruder beings, who have left their agate knives and rough flint weapons in the Narbada valley. In front of this far-stretching background of the bronze and stone ages we see the aborigines beaten down by the newly-arrived Aryan race.

#### *Subjugated Tribes.*

The subjugated tribes were named by their conquerors dasyus, or enemies, and dasas, or slaves, the latter remaining to this day a common family name among the lower classes of Bengal. The Aryans from the North prided themselves on their fair complexion, and the Sanskrit for color came to mean race or caste. Their earliest poets, at least three thousand and perhaps four thousand years ago, praised in the Veda their gods who, slaying the dasyus, protected the Aryan color, who subjected the black-skins to the Aryan men. Moreover the Aryan, with his finely formed features, loathed the squat Mongolian faces of the aborigines, and the Vedic hymns abound in scornful epithets for the primitive tribes, as noseless or flat-nosed disturbers of sacrificers, gross feeders on flesh, lawless, without gods and without rites. As time went on, and these rude tribes were

driven back into the forest, they were painted in still more hideous shapes, till they became the monsters and demons of the Aryan poet and priest. Thus, their race name, *dasyu*, or enemy, came to signify a goblin or devil, as the old Teutonic word for enemy has become the English fiend.

Nevertheless, all of them were not savages. We hear of wealthy *dasyus*, and even the Vedic hymns speak of their seven castles and ninety forts. In the later Sanskrit literature the Aryans make alliance with aboriginal princes, and at the beginning of authentic history we find some of the most powerful kingdoms of India ruled by dynasties of non-Aryan descent; nor were they without religious rites and craving after future life. Says a very ancient Sanskrit treatise: "They adorn the bodies of their dead with gifts, with raiment, with ornaments, imagining that thereby they will attain the world to come." These ornaments were pieces of bronze, copper and gold, such as are now dug from beneath their rude stone monuments. In the great Sanskrit epic which describes the advance of the Aryans into Southern India, a non-Aryan chief describes his race as of fearful swiftness, unyielding in battle, in color like a dark blue cloud. Pushed back by the Aryans from the plains, these primitive people have lain hidden in the recesses of the mountains, like the remains of extinct animals which zoologists find in hill-caves. Thus India forms a great museum of races, in which man can be studied from his lowest to his highest stage of civilization; and no study can prove more interesting than that of a people so numerous and varied, with so much

of antiquity behind them, and with a history at once unique and inviting.

### *The Aryan Race.*

From the noble Aryan race are descended not only the Brahman and the Rajput, but all the nations of western Europe, and their vigorous offspring in North America and every quarter of the world. From its earliest home in Central Asia certain branches started for the east and others for the west. By one of the offshoots of the latter was founded the Persian kingdom; by another the Hellenic States; by a third was reared the city on the seven hills, which grew into imperial Rome. Meanwhile other branches had gone forth eastward, forcing their way in powerful bands through the passes of the Himalayas, and gradually spreading over India.

Of the Aryan tribes in their camping-grounds in Central Asia we know but little. It is believed, however, that they roamed over the grassy steppes with their cattle, making long halts to raise crops of grain. They had tamed most of the domestic animals, were acquainted with some of the metals and wore clothes of woven fabrics. They lived a hardy life in these chilly Asiatic highlands, and ages afterward, when Brahman priests prayed for long life in the sultry plains of India, they asked for a hundred winters. For unnumbered centuries the forefathers of the Englishman, the American, the German, the Roman, the Greek, the Persian and the Hindoo dwelt side by side on the great Asiatic plateau, speaking the same tongue and worshipping the

same gods. Though the languages of Europe and India seem, at first sight, widely apart, they are in fact merely different forms of the original Aryan. Thus the names most commonly used in family life, as father and mother, brother and sister, are the same, whether used on the banks of the Ganges, the Tiber, the Thames or the Mississippi.

### Literature.

The oldest poetry of the Hindoos is contained in their Vedas and Puranas, the former constituting the Scriptures and the latter the traditions of their faith. Midway between them, in point of antiquity, are the two great epic poems known as the *Ramayana* and the *Maha-Bharata*, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Sanskrit literature. The *Maha-Bharata*, or Great Bharata, contains eighteen parts and one hundred thousand distichs.

It relates the history of the war between the great heroic families, the sons of Pandu and the sons of Kuru. The former, after being driven from the throne usurped by the younger race, return with a mighty army to claim their ancestral sceptre. The battle is about to begin. On one side the tall and valiant Bhishma, leader of the sons of Kuru, harangues his followers in a voice that "thunders like a roaring lion," blowing his shell of battle to which the conchs and all the warlike music of his host reply. On the other side appears Arjuna in his splendid car, drawn by white horses and attended by the god Krishna. All his captains likewise blow their conchs and the combat opens. But at this critical moment occurs the remarkable episode called the *Bhag-*

*arat-Gita*, or Divine Song, which, in the form of a dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, sets forth the doctrines of the Brahministic pantheism.

### The Divine Song.

Arjuna orders his chariot to be driven into the space between the two armies. He surveys the opposing hosts, each composed of his kindred, brothers in arms against brothers; a deep melancholy passes over him, and thus he addresses Krishna, who stands by his side:

My kindred, Krishna, I behold all standing for the battle  
armed;  
My every quivering member fails, and wan and withered is  
my face;  
Cold shuddering runs through all my frame; my hair stands  
stiff upon my head;  
My bow falls from my nerveless hand, and all my burning  
skin is parched;  
I cannot move, I cannot stand; within my reeling spirit  
swims;  
On every side, O fair-haired god, I see the dark, ill-omened  
signs.  
My kindred when I've slain in fight, what happiness remains  
for me?  
For victory, Krishna, care not I, nor empire, nor the bliss of  
life.  
For what is empire? what is wealth? And what, great king,  
is life itself,  
When those for whom we thirst for wealth and toil for empire  
and for bliss  
Stand in the battle-field arrayed and freely peril wealth and  
life?  
Teachers, sons, fathers, grandsires, uncles, nephews, cousins,  
kindred, friends,

Not for the triple world would I, O Madhui's conqueror!  
slaughter them;  
How much less for this narrow earth, though they would  
sternly slaughter me.

Arjuna dwells further on the miseries of the civil war, the extinction of noble races, the suspension of splendid family alliances, the interruption of all sacred rites, the general impiety, and the license among females. He then sinks back in his chariot, lays aside his bow and arrows, and waits the answers of the god. Krishna sternly reproves his tameness of spirit. Arjuna replies in a still sadder tone, and declares that he had rather beg his bread than win empire by the slaughter of his kindred. The reply of Krishna breathes the spirit of pantheistic fatalism. Under this system the murder, the massacre of the dearest kindred, are indifferent. Death and life are but unimportant modifications of the same being, and the immortality of the soul becomes an argument for the utter disregard of human suffering in the present state of being:

Thou mourn'st for those thou shouldst not mourn, albeit thy  
words are like the wise;  
For those who live and those who die may never mourn the  
truly wise.  
Ne'er was the time when I was naught, nor thou, nor yonder  
kings of earth.  
Hereafter ne'er shall be the time when one of us shall cease  
to be.  
The soul within its mortal frame glides on through childhood,  
youth and age;  
Then in another form renewed, renews its stated course again.  
All indestructible is he that spread the living universe,

And who is he that shall destroy the work of the indestructible?

Corruptible these bodies are that wrap the everlasting soul,  
The eternal, unimaginable soul. Whence on to battle, Bharata,  
For he that thinks to slay the soul, or he that thinks the soul  
is slain,

Are fondly both alike deceived; it is not slain, it slayeth not;  
It is not born, it doth not die; past, present, future knows it  
not.

Ancient, eternal and unchanged, it dies not with the dying  
frame.

Who knows it incorruptible and everlasting and unborn,  
What heeds he whether he may slay, or fall himself in battle  
slain?

As their old garments men cast off, anon new raiment to assume,

So casts the soul its worn-out frame and takes at once another  
form.

The weapon cannot pierce it through, nor waste it the consuming  
fire;

The liquid waters melt it not, nor dries it up the parching  
wind;

Impenetrable and unlearned, impermeable and undried,  
Perpetual, ever-wandering, firm, indissoluble, permanent,  
Invisible, unspeakable; thus deeming, wherefore mourn for it?  
But didst thou think that it was born, and didst thou think  
that it could die?

Even then thou shouldst not mourn for it with idle grief, O  
Bharata.

Whate'er is born must surely die; whate'er can die is born  
again.

Wherefore the inevitable doom thou shouldst not mourn, O  
Bharata.

Arjuna listens with deep submission and reverence,  
and by degrees draws from Krishna the whole philosophy  
of religion concerning the nature of the gods, the  
universe, the supreme good, and the highest wisdom. As



to the comparative merits of an active or contemplative life, so freely agitated in the Grecian school, the *Bhagavat-Gita* departs from the usual doctrine of the East and soars to a loftier mysticism. The highest perfection to which a human soul can attain is action without passion; the mind is to be entirely independent of external objects; to preserve its undisturbed serenity it should have the conscious power of withdrawing all its senses within itself, "as the tortoise draws all its limbs within its shell." Action is necessary, but it must produce no emotion, no sensation on the calm spirit within. Whatever may be their consequences, however important, however awful, events ought to be unfelt and almost unperceived by the impassive mind, and on this principle Arjuna is to execute the fatal slaughter upon his kindred without the least feeling of sorrow or fear or compunction. The soul in this state of unbroken quietude,

Floats like the lotus on the lake unmoved, unruffled by the tide.

The senses are employed in their separate functions, but the soul maintains its stately inactivity.

The occupations and privileges of the holy anchorites approach the highest perfectibility. Their duty is to keep all the avenues to the senses closed and to retain the soul within itself so that they may attain on earth the glorious prerogative of seeing all things in God and discerning the divine Unity which comprehends all things. After death they ascend to and are absorbed into Brahm, the great primal spirit. If, through their own want of

resolution, or cut short by death, they depart before they have accomplished their task, they may be born again, after many ages, in some pious family, recommence their course and start afresh from the point of holiness and advancement at which they broke off during their former life.

Krishna gradually develops his own nature and at length distinctly proclaims himself an avatar of the supreme deity, Brahma himself, from whom all things emanate, into whom all are reabsorbed. Rising by degrees, he first declares himself to be whatever is most excellent in the whole of nature. He is the soul in the body; among the stars the most splendid; among mountains, Meru; among rivers, the Ganges; among words, the mystic monosyllable; the noblest of animals, of birds and fish; among the letters, A; among the seasons, spring, and what is most extraordinary, among frauds, gambling with dice. Whatever, in short, is preëminent or splendid derives its quality from being, as it were, a portion of the divine essence. He even goes so far as to assert that as god he is not merely all existence but likewise all non-existence.

Immortality and death am I; I am what is and what is not.

Still there is a distinction between the deity and the universe which is illustrated in the following similitude:

As the wide permeating air fills all the ether's boundless space,  
So deem ye that indwells in me the sum of all created things.

And by another in which the universe is represented as a chain of pearls suspended from the supreme being. Arjuna implores the deity that he may enjoy the sacred privileges of beholding the godhead in its real nature. Krishna assents to his petition, and purifies his eyesight for the insupportable vision:

Behold my million forms divine of every kind and shape and  
hue,  
Wonders ne'er seen by mortal eye thou shalt behold, O Bhara-  
rata.  
Yet with thine earthly vision thou that mystic sight may'st not  
behold;  
I give to thee an eye divine to gaze on all my mysteries.

The veil of mortal sense is removed, and the god appears as he is:

As from a thousand suns the lights were blazing over all the  
heaven,  
Even such the full magnificence of that o'erweening splendor  
shone,  
The unity of all the world and all their multiformity  
Embodied in the god of gods at once the son of Pandu saw.

In an agony of terror, his hair uplifted, his head on high, his hands clasped in supplication, Arjuna addresses the awful being:

All beings, god, in thee I see, and every animated tribe,  
And Brahma on his lotus throne, and all the wise and heavenly  
host.  
I see thee with thy countless arms and sides and visages and  
eyes,  
Infinite on every side, without beginning, middle, end,

Thou wear'st the crown, thou wield'st the club, the fatal disk—  
on every side  
Intense, immeasurable light, in every part of blazing sun.

The poet dwells much longer on the magnificence of the vision; but at length the deity assumes a terrific appearance, for as all things emanate from, so all things are reabsorbed into this universal being. He is not only the creator and origin, but likewise the destroyer and termination of all created things, and is represented as a being into whose immense and horrid jaw the whole human race precipitates itself and is swallowed up:

Even as the torrent rivers pour to Ocean's all-absorbing flood,  
Even so the heroes of mankind rush headlong to thy flaming  
mouth.

What art thou in that dreadful shape? All hail to thee, thou  
mightiest god!

Thy form primeval I would know, yet may not guess thy dread  
design.

Krishna replies, and brings back the whole description to the point from which they set forth, as he began, with the same lesson of inexorable fatalism:

Time, the destroyer, I prepared to extinguish all yon armed  
host.

Save thee, shall not a man survive in that proud battle line  
arrayed.

Wherefore arise, the glory win, defeat the foe, enjoy the  
throne;

By me already are they slain; fate's passive instrument art  
thou.

Slay Dron and Bhishma, Jagathrath and Karm, and all the val-  
iant host.

Strike them, already struck by me; be fearless and be conqueror.

### The Nalus.

The Nalus, or Nala, is another episode of the Maha Bharata, but of an entirely different description. It is a poem full of pathetic interest, and if there is anything of Indian song, translated into European languages, that is likely to attract general attention, it is this beautiful story, which requires only a poet's hand to transplant it in its living freshness to a foreign clime. Nala, the monarch of Nishadha, centred in his person all the noble qualities that could distinguish an Indian monarch. He surpassed all kings in justice, all men in beauty; and he was unrivalled in the management of horses. Bhima, the king of Vidarbha, had an only daughter, the most beautiful and modest of her sex—the gentle Damajanti. These two perfect beings became mutually enamored, each one esteeming the other's admirable qualities. Wandering in the woods, one day, Nala beholds a flock of birds with golden wings, who offer to convey the tidings of his passion to the ear of the princess. He accepts their proposal and the birds set forth on their mission:

Flew away the swans rejoicing, to Vidarbha straight they flew,  
To Vidarbha's stately city, there by Damajanti's feet  
Down with drooping plumes they settled, and she gazed upon  
the flock,  
Wondering at their forms so graceful, where amid her maids  
she sat.  
Sportively began the damsels all around to chase the birds;  
Scattering flew the swans before her, all about the lovely grove.

Lightly ran the nimble maidens, every one her bird pursued;  
But the swan that through the forest gentle Damajanti followed

Suddenly in human language spake unto the princess thus:  
Damajanti, in Vidarbha dwells a noble monarch, Nala.  
Fair in form as the Aswinas, peerless among men is he,  
Like Kandharba in his beauty, like a god in human form—  
Truly if that thou wert wedded to this man, O peerless princess,

Beautiful would be thy children, like to him, thou slender maid.  
We have seen gods and Gandharvas, men, the Serpents, and  
the Rishis,

All we've seen, but ne'er the equal have we seen of noble Nala.  
Pearl art thou among all women; Nala is the pride of men.

The swans receive a favorable answer from the princess and take flight. The kings of all the earth, and all the chieftians and warriors who aspire to the hand of this fair Helen of the East, are summoned to an assemblage where the princess is to designate the favored suitor by throwing a wreath of flowers about his neck. The roads to the court of Vidarbha are crowded with rajahs and kings, and groan beneath the weight of steeds and cars and elephants. Nala, of course, is among them, but on his way he encounters four formidable rivals; Indra, the god of the firmament; Agni, the god of fire; Varuna, the god of waters, and Yama, the god of the infernal regions. They declare that they have come to seek the hand of the lovely Damajanti, and adjure Nala by his piety and allegiance to the gods to undertake the ungracious task of bearing their message. He remonstrates, but piety overcomes his passion, and suddenly, by the divine aid, he finds himself transported into the bower of the princess:

There he saw Vidarbha's maiden, girt with all her virgin bands,

Bright in beauty full of softness, worthy of her noble blood;  
Every limb in round proportion, slender sides and lovely eyes;  
Even the moon's soft gleam despising in her own o'erpowering brightness.

As he gazed, his love grew warmer to the softly smiling maid,  
Yet to keep his troth, his duty, all his passion he suppressed.

He delivers the message of the gods, but the maiden declares that even in their presence she will select the noble Nala.

But a new difficulty arises; for when the assembly is met together Damajanti discovers, to her dismay, five Nalas, each of the deities having assumed his features, form and dress. She supplicates them, and moved with compassion, they stand confessed, with feet that do not touch the ground, eyes that do not close, bodies casting no shadow, and crowned with chaplets of celestial amaranth. The form of Nala himself is distinguished by the opposite of all these attributes, and

Modestly the large-eyed maiden lifted up his garment's hem;  
Round his shoulders threw she lightly the bright zone of radiant flowers.

The assembly breaks up amid the applause of the gods and the lamentations of unsuccessful suitors. The nuptials are celebrated; Nala and his bride are blest with two children, and both are models of virtue and beloved by their subjects.

But the course of true love never runs smooth. On their return from the assembly the gods had met the

fierce and vindictive Kali and another deity, who swore eternal vengeance against Nala. In an unlucky hour Nala is guilty of an act of impurity through omitting a certain ablution, and the demon Kali at once enters into him, perverting his understanding and changing his entire disposition, so that only one virtue remains—the love of Damajanti. He plays at dice, loses his wealth, his palaces, his kingdom, and even his clothes, so that nothing remains but Damajanti herself. They are driven forth into the wilderness, with but one garment between them; for a bird has flown away with the only one that Nala had retained, mocking the spendthrift gambler. They are also proscribed by an edict, which makes it a capital crime to afford them assistance or receive them under any roof. Nala persuades his miserable wife to abandon him to his fate, and retire to her father's court, where her children have already been sent. The following is her reply:

Truly all my heart is breaking, and my sinking members fail,  
When, O king, thy desperate counsel once I think on, once  
again.

Robbed of kingdom, robbed of riches, naked, worn with thirst  
and hunger,

Shall I leave thee in the forest, shall I wander from thee far?  
When thou, sad and famine-stricken, thinkest of thy former  
bliss,

In the wildwood, O my husband, I will soothe thy weariness.

Like a wife is no physician, in a state so bad as thine;

Medicine none is like her kindness—Nala, speak not I the  
truth?

Nala promises that they shall not part, but overcome by the evil spirit within him, he determines to abandon



her while she is sleeping; cuts off part of her single garment and leaves her lying half naked on the hard, cold ground. He entreats for her the protection of the gods, but trusts to a still surer safeguard, and that is her virtue. Damajanti's chief support is her deep, ardent and self-sacrificing love for her faithless husband.

Damajanti woke, the beauteous, in the wildwood, full of dread.  
When she did not see her husband, overpowered with grief and pain,

Loud she shrieked in her first anguish—Where art thou, Nishardha's king?

Mighty king! my sole protector! Ah! my lord, desert'st thou me?

Oh! I'm lost, undone forever; helpless in the wildwood left.  
Faithful once to every duty wert thou, king, and true in word;  
True in word art thou to leave me, slumbering in the forest thus?

Couldst thou then depart, forsaking thy weak, faithful, once-loved wife,

Her that never sinned against thee, now, alas! so sinned against?

Oh, I fear! thou famous conqueror, shew thee to me, O my lord.

Her adventures are as strange and varied as ever happened to errant damsel in romance. She is in danger from a deadly serpent, and is saved by a huntsman, only to fall into greater peril from his unhallowed desires. She prays for divine aid, and the huntsman falls dead at her feet. She approaches a sacred mountain and thus addresses its Genius:

O thou holy, honored mountain, heavenward rising, widely famed,

Refuge of the helpless, noble; hall, thou pillar of the earth!

Reverent I approach and hail thee—I, the daughter of a king.  
Hast thou haply seen my Nala, wandering in the savage  
woods?

Why repliest thou not, O mountain, nor consol'st me with thy  
voice?

Her in anguish, thine own daughter, her so lone, so full of  
dread?

Presently Damajanti descends into a quiet valley, inhabited by hermits, who are clothed in the bark of trees. Amazed at her beauty, they worship her as a divinity:

Speak, O thou of form so heavenly; who art thou and what  
thy purpose?

Of the wood art thou the goddess, or the mountain-goddess  
thou?

Or the river nymph, the beauteous? Blessed spirit, speak the  
truth.

Her next adventure is extremely picturesque. She meets a caravan of travelling merchants, who also adore her as a celestial being, and gladly admit her into their cavalcade. At nightfall their tents are pitched by a beautiful stream, covered with lotus flowers.

When the midnight came, all noiseless came in silence deep  
and still,

Weary slept the band of merchants. Lo! a herd of elephants  
Came to drink the mountain river, oozing moisture from their  
temples.

When the caravan they gazed on, the tame elephants they  
scented,

Forward ran they, wild and furious, tossing fierce their murderous trunks;

Irresistible the onset of the rushing, ponderous beasts,  
As the peak from some high mountain thundering rolls into  
into the valley.

Strewn was all the way before them with the boughs, the limbs  
of trees.

On they crashed to where the travellers slumbered by the lotus  
lake;

Trampled down without a struggle, helpless on the earth they  
lay.

Woe, O woe! shrieked out the merchants; wildly some began  
to fly,

In the forest thickets plunging; some stood gasping, blind  
with dread.

Many, miserably shrieking, cast them down upon the earth;

Many climbed the trees in anguish, or plunged deep beneath  
the waves.

The disaster is ascribed to the presence of Damajanti, who is forced to fly, and at length reaches a hospitable city, where, though half naked and worn with toil and sorrow, she is adored for her beauty and received with the greatest kindness. Finally she is discovered by some wandering Brahmins and restored to her home, where she proclaims another assemblage with a view to a second marriage. This is an unpardonable offence in a lady of her rank, but her real object is the discovery of Nala.

The adventures of Nala meanwhile are hardly less romantic; he has an encounter with an enchanted serpent; his appearance is entirely changed, and in this disguise he obtains an appointment as master of the horse at the court of Oude. Rituparna, king of Oude, determines to become a candidate for the hand of the princess, and sets forth with Nala as charioteer. As they enter the city of king Bhima, Damajanti recognizes the sound of her husband's trampling steeds.

All her heart was thrilled with wonder as she heard the welcome sound;

On they seemed to come, as Nala drove of yore his trampling  
steeds;  
Damajanti heard and trembled at the old familiar sound.

The princess employs every artifice to discover her husband; she suspects the charioteer about whom all is wonderful and mysterious. The gates open of their own accord to let him in; self-kindled fire is ever ready at his call, and the water flows toward him when he is in need of it. She procures some of his food and recognizes the well-known flavor of her husband's cooking. By her handmaid she sends her children to him, and on seeing them he bursts into tears. Damajanti contrives an interview, and thus questions the mysterious stranger:

Hast thou ever seen Mahaka, an upright and noble man,  
Who departed and abandoned in the woods his wife that slept,  
The beloved wife and blameless, in the wildwood worn with  
grief?

Him who was my chosen husband, him for whom I scorned  
the gods?

Could he leave the true, the loving, her that hath his children  
borne?

Nala can conceal himself no longer; but the thought that his wife is about to take a second husband rankles in his heart, and he rebukes her with sternness. Damajanti thus protests her innocence:

He through all the world that wanders, witness the all-seeing  
Wind,

Let him now of life bereave me, if in this 'gainst thee I've  
sinned.

And the Sun that ever moveth o'er the bosom of the deep,

Let him now of life bereave me, if in this 'gainst thee I've sinned.

Witness, too, the Moon that travels through the midst of all the world;

Let her too of life bereave me, if in this 'gainst thee I've sinned.

These three gods are those that govern the three worlds—so let them speak.

If these gods can say with justice, "Cast her off," so let it be. Thus adjured, a solemn witness spake the Wind from out the air:

She hath done or thought no evil, Nala, it is truth I speak. King, the treasure of her virtue Damajanti well hath guarded; We ourselves have seen and watched her closely for three livelong years.

Even as thus the Wind was speaking, flowers fell showering all around,

And the god's sweet music sounded, floating on the soft west wind.

Nala reassumes his old form, and the poem ends with his winning back all that he had lost, reascending his ancestral throne and commencing anew a reign of justice, piety and happiness. The story is full of interest and variety, pure in tone, rich in imagery, and delicate in sentiment.

#### INCEPTION OF THE DRAMA.

The Hindoo writers ascribe the invention of dramatic entertainments to an inspired sage, Bharata, or to the communications made to him by the god, Brahma himself, concerning an art gathered from the Vedas. As the

word Bharata, however, signifies an actor, it is probably a mere personification of the origin of the drama. Three kinds of entertainments, of which the *natya*, defined as a dance combined with gesticulation and speech, comes nearest to the drama, were said to have been exhibited before the gods by the spirits and nymphs of India's heaven, and to these the god Siva added two new styles of dancing.

The inception of the drama was thus doubtless of a religious character; it sprang from the union of song and dance in the festivals of the gods, to which were afterward added narrative recitation and dialogue, first sung, then spoken. Such scenes and stories from the mythology of Vishnu are still occasionally enacted in pantomime or spoken dialogue in India; and the most ancient Hindoo play is said to have treated an episode from the history of that deity, the choice of him as a consort by Laxmi—a favorite kind of subject in the Hindoo drama. The tradition connecting its earliest themes with the native mythology of Vishnu agrees with that ascribing the origin of a particular kind of performance—the *Sangita*—to Krishna and the shepherdesses. The author's later poem, the *Gītagovinda*, has been conjectured as suggestive of the earliest species of Hindoo dramas. But while the epic poetry of the Hindoos gradually approached the dramatic in the way of dialogue, their drama developed itself independently out of the union of the lyric and epic forms. Their dramatic poetry arose later than their great epic works, the *Maha-Bharata* and the *Ramayana*, which had again been long preceded by the hymnody of the Vedas. The beginning of

Indian drama may accordingly belong to the third century B. C., though we know it only from a later date. But by the time it produced the first specimens with which we are acquainted it had already reached its zenith, and it was therefore looked upon as having sprung into being as a perfect art. We know it only in its glory, its decline and its decay.

### Periods of the Hindoo Drama.

The history of Hindoo dramatic literature may be roughly divided into the following periods:

I. From the first century B. C. to the tenth century B. C.—This period belongs to the pre-Mahometan age of Indian history, but to the division of it in which Buddhism has already become a powerful factor in the social, as well as in the moral and intellectual life of the land. It is the classical era of the Hindoo drama, and includes the works of its two indisputably greatest masters. Of these Kalidasa was by far the earlier, living at the court of King Vikramaditya of Avanti, and being accounted the brightest of its “nine gems” of genius. He is the author of *Sakuntala*—the work which, translated by Sir William Jones, first revealed to the western world of letters the existence of a Hindoo drama. It is a love-idyll of surpassing beauty, and, in the opinion of the highest authorities, one of the masterpieces of the poetic literature of the world. Kalidasa’s other drama, *Vikrama and Urvashi*, or *The Hero and the Nymph*, though inferior as a whole to *Sakuntala*, contains one act of incomparable loveliness; and its enduring effect

upon Indian dramatic literature is shown by the imitations of it in later plays. To Kalidasa has likewise been attributed a third play,—the *Malavikagnimitra*—but it is doubtful whether this comedy, though held to be of ancient date, was not composed by another poet of the same name.

Another work of high merit, the pathetic *Mrichchhakati*, or *The Toy-Cart*, a domestic drama with a public underplot, may possibly belong to the close of the second Christian century, and seems certainly of an earlier date than the tenth. It is attributed, as is not uncommon with Indian plays, to a royal author named Sudraka.

The palm of preëminence is disputed with Kalidasa by the great dramatic poet Bābhavuti—called also Crikantha, or he in whose throat is fortune—who flourished in the earlier part of the eighth century. While he is considered more artificial in language than his rival, and in general more bound by rules, he can hardly be deemed his inferior in dramatic genius. Of his three extant plays, *Mahavara-Charitra* and *Uttara-Rama-Charitra* are heroic dramas concerned with the adventures of Rama, the seventh incarnation of Vishnu; the third, the powerful *Malati and Madhava*, has love for its theme, and has been called the *Romeo and Juliet* of the Hindoos. It is considered by their critical authorities the best example of the drama of domestic life.

Among the remaining chief works of Indian dramatic literature the *Veni-Samhara* is thought probably to date from about the eighth or ninth century, its author's



name being doubtful. The play is described as one in which both pathos and horror are exaggerated, the violence of its action recalling the manner of Shakespeare's predecessors. The next series of plays forms a transition between the first era of Hindoo dramatic literature and the period of decline.

### Decline of the Drama.

II. The decadence of the drama lasted from about the eleventh to the fourteenth century of our era, the beginning roughly coinciding with that of a continuous series of Mahometan invasions of India. *Hanuman-Nataka*, or *The Great Nataka*—for this play, the work of several hands, surpasses all others in length, extending over fourteen acts—dates from the tenth or eleventh century. Its story is taken from the Rama cycle, and a prominent character in it is the mythical monkey-chief Hanuman, to whom, indeed, tradition ascribed the original authorship of the play. Krishnamicra's "theosophic mystery," as it has been called, is ascribed by one authority to the middle of the eleventh century, by another to about the end of the twelfth. The dates of the famous *Ratnavali*, or *The Necklace*, a court-comedy of love and intrigue, with a half Terentian plot, and of the interesting Buddhist drama *Nagananda*, which begins as an erotic play, but passes into a most impressive exemplification of the supreme virtue of self-sacrifice, depend on the disputed question of their respective authorship. One of them belongs to the first quarter of the twelfth century, the other to an earlier time. Finally, Visak-

hadatta's interesting drama of political intrigue, *The Signet of the Minister*, in which Prince Chandragupta, presumably identifiable with the Sandrocottus, who is mentioned by ancient Greek historians, makes his appearance, was probably composed later than the end of the twelfth century. This is the only Indian play known to us with an essentially historical fable—a noteworthy circumstance, if, as is most probable, it was produced at a time when the Mahometan invasions had already begun.

The remaining plays of which it has been possible to conjecture the dates range in the time of their composition from the end of the eleventh to the fourteenth century. Of this period, as compared with the first, the general characteristic seems to be an undue preponderance of narrative and description, and an affected and over-elaborated style. As a striking instance of this class is mentioned a play on the adventures of Rama, which in spite, or by reason, of the commonplace character of its sentiments, the extravagance of its diction and the obscurity of its mythology, is stated to enjoy a higher reputation with the pundits of the present age than the masterpieces of Kalidasa and Bābhavuti. To the close of this period has likewise been ascribed the only Tamil drama of which we possess an English version. *Arichandra*, or *The Martyr of Truth*, exemplifies—with a strange likeness in plot to the *Book of Job* and *Faust*—in the trials of a heroically enduring king, the maxim “Better die than lie.”

Isolated plays remain from centuries later than the fourteenth, but these, which chiefly turn on the legends

of Krishna, the last incarnation of Vishnu, may be regarded as a mere after-growth, and exhibit the Indian drama in its decay. Indeed, the latest of them, *Chitra-Yajna*, which was composed about the beginning of the nineteenth century, and still serves as a model for Bengali dramatic performances, is imperfect in its dialogue, which is left for the actors to supplement. Besides these there are farces or farcical entertainments, more or less indelicate and of uncertain dates.

The number of plays which have come down to us from so vast an expanse of time is both relatively and absolutely small. Wilson doubts whether all the plays to be found, and those mentioned by Hindoo writers on the drama, amount to more than sixty, and it has been seen that not more than three are ascribed to either of the two great masters. To these should be added, however, the plays in Tamil, stated to be about a hundred in number, and to have been composed by poets who enjoyed the patronage of the Pandian kings of Madura.

The Hindoos have abundance of dramatic theory. The sage Bharata, the reputed inventor of dramatic entertainments, was likewise revered as the father of dramatic criticism. The commentators constantly cite his sutras or aphorisms. By the eleventh century, when the drama was already approaching its decline, dramatic criticism had reached an advanced point, and the *Dasa Rupaka* distinctly defines the several kinds of dramatic composition. Other critical works followed at later dates, exhibiting a rage for subdivision unsurpassed by the efforts of Western theorists, ancient or modern; the misfortune is that few examples of such works remain.

"What," inquires the manager of an actor in the induction to one of the most famous of Indian plays, "are those qualities which the virtuous, the wise, the venerable, the learned and the Brahmans require in a drama?" "Profound exposition of the various passions," is the reply, "pleasing interchange of mutual affection, loftiness of character, delicate expression of desire, a surprising story and elegant language." "Then," says the manager, "I recollect one." And he proceeds to state that "Babhavuti has given us a drama composed by him, replete with all qualities, to which indeed this sentence is applicable: 'How little do they know who speak of us with censure! This entertainment is not for them. Possibly some one exists, or will exist, of similar tastes with myself; for time is boundless and the world is wide.'" This self-possessed disregard of popularity, springing from an imperturbable consciousness of lofty aims, accounts for much that is characteristic of the higher class of Hindoo plays. It explains both their paucity and their length, renders intelligible the chief peculiarity in their diction, and furnishes the key to their most striking ethical as well as literary qualities.

#### **Sanskrit Dramas.**

The Hindoo drama is distinguished from every other by a most remarkable peculiarity; it is not in the vernacular tongue! The greater part of every play—and almost all the finest—is written in Sanskrit; but Sanskrit, though once a spoken tongue in some parts of India, was never the language of the whole country, and

had ceased to be a living dialect at a period of which we have no knowledge. The plays, therefore, were unintelligible to a great—perhaps the greater—part of the audience. This must have somewhat impaired the pleasure of the spectators. The explanation of this peculiarity is to be found in the constitution of Hindoo society—not only the highest offices of the state, but the highest branches of literature, being reserved for the privileged Brahmins. As Wilson says, but a small portion could have followed the expressions of the actors so as to have felt their full force, and the plays of the Hindoos must therefore have been exceedingly deficient in theatrical effect.

#### Audiences.

Yet there were circumstances attending these representations that in some measure compensated the evil of their being unintelligible; most of the stories on which the plays were founded were popular; there was a sanctity in Sanskrit, and indeed in the whole performance, that “substituted an adventitious interest for ordinary excitement.” People went prepared to be interested, and with a religious temper of awe and reverence; the spectacle before their eyes must have awakened their imaginations, and there is no setting bounds to the effect that may be produced on feelings willing and ready to be roused by the power of good acting and of stirring scenery, especially if it represent objects and events consecrated by superstition. These dramas, too, were not every-day entertainments. Like those of the

Athenians they were written with a view but to one specific representation, and were acted only on solemn or public occasions—such as lunar holidays, a royal coronation, assemblages of people at fairs and religious festivals, marriages, the meeting of friends, taking first possession of a house or a town, and the birth of a son. The most ordinary occasion, however, of a performance was the season peculiarly sacred to some divinity. When all these things are taken into account, the peculiarity no longer seems a mystery, and we can easily enough imagine how, with the sympathy of the Sanskrit scholars, who understood and felt all that was uttered, may have blended that of the many who knew but their vernacular, till the whole congregation was moved; for the sounds, of which the ignorant part of the audience knew not the precise significance, would operate upon their feelings like those of natural language; so that we seem to have brought ourselves to the admission of an important truth, that the unintelligible may be extremely affecting or exciting, and a play most delightful, of which not one word in ten is understood, except from the tones and gesticulations of the actors.

#### **Subjects of the Drama.**

In other respects, besides its sacred character, the Hindoo drama resembled that of the Greeks. It never entirely renounced its original elements of music and dancing, though, as at Athens, the dancing, which was at first the whole of the mute and imitative exhibition, was retired into the interlude, or refined into appropriate

gesticulation, and the music, in like manner, receded into a subordinate position, either as an accompaniment to lyric songs or to fill the intervals between the acts. The ballet, or pantomime, however, continued to exist as a separate spectacle, and in many provinces a species of burlesque, consisting of buffoonery and comic songs, representing the deeds of Rama or Krishna, and closely akin to the satyric drama of the Greeks, is still extremely popular.

Almost every species of drama known to the Western world has also its counterpart in India, and if, as is stated, the extant plays do not exceed threescore, they make up in variety for what they lack in number. They have been classed, moreover, with all the minuteness of Polonius, except that tragedy, with her bowl and dagger, may not tread the Hindoo stage, for this gentle people will not endure the sight of blood. Their critics know no distinction directly corresponding to that between tragedy and comedy, their plays confine themselves "neither to the crimes nor to the absurdities of mankind; neither to the momentous changes nor lighter vicissitudes of life; neither to the terrors of distress nor the gaieties of prosperity." In truth, the individual and social organization of society is unfavorable to the development of violent emotion. In accordance with the child-like element in their character, they dislike an unhappy ending to any story, and a positive rule accordingly prohibits a fatal conclusion. The general term for all dramatic compositions is *rupaka*, from *rupa*, form. Of the various subdivisions of the *rupaka*, in a limited sense, the *nataka*, or play proper, represents the most

perfect kind. Its subject should always be celebrated and important—either heroism or love, and most frequently the latter—and the hero should be a demigod or divinity, or a king. But although the earlier dramatists took their plots from the sacred writings or *Puranas*, they held themselves at liberty to vary the incidents—a license from which the later poets abstained. Thus, in accordance perhaps with the respective developments in the religious life of the two peoples, the Hindoo drama in this respect reversed the progressive practice of the Greek. The *prakaranas* agree in all essentials with the *natakas*, except that they are less elevated; their stories are mere fictions taken from actual life in a respectable class of society. Among the species of the *uparupakas* may be mentioned the *trotaka*, in which the personages are partly human, partly divine, as in a famous example that has come down to us. Of the *bhana*, a monologue in one act, one literary example is extant—a curious picture of manners in which the speaker describes the different persons he meets at a spring festival in the streets of Kolahalapur. The satire of the farcical *prahasanas* is usually directed against the hypocrisy of ascetics and Brahmans, and the sensuality of the wealthy and powerful. These trifles represent the lower extreme of the dramatic scale, to which, of course, the principles that follow only partially apply.

#### Regulations.

Unity of action is strictly enjoined by Hindoo theory, though not invariably observed in practice. Episodical



or prolix interruptions are forbidden, but in order to facilitate the connection the story of the play is sometimes carried on by narratives spoken by actors or "interpreters." Unity of time is liberally, if rather arbitrarily, understood by the later critical authorities as limiting the duration of the action to a single year, but even this is exceeded in more than one classical play. The single acts are to confine the events occurring in them to "one course of the sun," and usually do so. Unity of place is unknown to the Hindoo drama, by reason of the absence of scenery, for the plays were performed in the open courts of palaces, perhaps at times in large halls set apart for public entertainments, or in the open air. Hence change of scene is usually indicated in the text, and we find the characters making long journeys on the stage under the eyes of the spectators.

With the solemn character of the higher kind of dramatic performances accord the rules and prohibitions defining what may be called the proprieties of the Hindoo drama. Not only should death never be inflicted, but the various operations of biting, scratching, kissing, eating, sleeping and the marriage ceremony should never take place on the stage. Yet such rules are made to be occasionally broken. It is true that the mild humor of the vidus shaka is restricted to his "gesticulative eating" instead of perpetrating the obnoxious act. The charming love scene in the *Sakuntala* breaks off just as the hero is about to act the part of the bee to the honey of the heroine's lips. But later writers are less squeamish or less refined. In two dramas the heroine is dragged on the stage by her braid of hair. In a

third, sleeping and the marriage ceremony occur in the course of the representation.

The dramatic construction of the Indian plays presents no very striking peculiarities. They open with a benediction, followed by some account of the author, and by an introductory scene between the manager and one of the actors, which is more or less skillfully connected with the opening of the play itself. This is divided into acts and scenes; of the former a *nataka* should have not fewer than five, nor more than ten, but the great *nataka* reaches fourteen. Thus the length of the higher class of plays is about that of an *Æschylean* trilogy; but not more than a single play was ever performed on the same occasion. Comic plays are restricted to two acts. In theory the scheme of a Hindoo drama corresponds very closely to the general outline of dramatic construction given above; it is a characteristic merit that the business is rarely concluded before the last act. The piece closes as it began, with a benediction or prayer. Within this framework room is found for situations as ingeniously devised and highly wrought as those in any modern Western play. What, for instance, could be more pitiful than the scene in *Sakuntala*, where the true wife appears before her husband, whose remembrance of her is fatally overclouded by a charm; what more terrific than that in *Malati and Madhava*, where the lover rescues his beloved from the horrors of the charnal-field? Recognition—especially between parents and children—frequently gives rise to scenes of pathos which Euripides has not surpassed. The ingenious device of a play within a play is em-

ployed with the utmost success by Babbavuti. On the other hand, miraculous metamorphosis and, in a later play, vulgar magic lend their aid to the progress of the action. With scenes of strong effectiveness contrast others of the most delicate poetic grace—such as the indescribably beautiful episode of the two damsels of the god of love helping one another to pluck the red and green bud from the mango tree; or of a domestic pathos—such as that of the courtesan listening to the prattle of her lover's child, one of the prettiest scenes of a kind rarely kept free from affectation in the modern drama. For the *dénouement*, in the narrower sense of the term, dramatists largely resort to the expedient of the *deus ex machina*, often in a sufficiently literal sense.

### Personages.

Every species of drama having its appropriate kind of hero or heroine theory here again amuses itself with an infinitude of subdivisions. Among the heroines are to be noticed the courtesans, whose social position to some extent resembles that of the Greek *hetærae*, and association with whom does not seem in practice, however it may be in theory, to be regarded as a disgrace even to Brahmans. In general the drama indicates relations between the sexes subject to peculiar restraints of usage, but freer than those which Mahometan example seems to have introduced into higher society. The male characters are frequently drawn with skill and sometimes with genuine force. Prince Samsthau-aka is a type of selfishness born in the purple, worthy

to rank beside figures of the modern drama, of which this has at times naturally been a favorite class of character; elsewhere the intrigues of ministers are not more fully exposed than their characters and principles of action are judiciously discriminated. Among the lesser personages common in the Hindoo drama, two are worth noticing, as corresponding, though by no means precisely, to familiar types of other dramatic literatures. These are the *vita*, the accomplished but dependent companion, and the *vidushaka*, the humble associate of the prince and the buffoon of the action. Strangely enough, he is always a Brahman, or the pupil of a Brahman. His humor is to be ever intent on the pleasures of a quiet life, and, in particular, on eating.

Thus, clothing itself in a diction always ornate and tropical, in which the prose is the warp and the verse the weft; in which words become allusions, allusions similes, and similes metaphors, the Indian drama essentially depended upon its literary qualities, and upon the familiar sanctity of its favorite themes, for such effect as it was able to produce. Of scenic apparatus it knew but little; exits and entrances were regulated in the simplest fashion, and the contrivances resorted to for "properties" required no skill. Propriety of costume, on the other hand, seems always to have been observed, agreeably both to the peculiarities of the drama and to the habits of the people.

The ministers of an art practised under such conditions could not but be regarded with respect, and spared the contempt, or worse, which, except among one other great civilized people, the Greeks, has everywhere at

one time or another been the actor's lot. Companies of actors seem to have been common in India at an early date, and the indications show the players to have been regarded as respectable members of society. In later, if not in earlier times, individual actors enjoyed a widespread reputation, or, as is stated in the inductions, are known to "all the world." Female parts were in general, though not invariably, represented by females. One would like to know whether such was the case in a piece where a crafty minister passes off his daughter as a boy, on which assumption she is all but married to a person of her own sex.

### **Excellencies and Defects.**

The Indian drama as literature rivals all except the very foremost dramas of the world. It would be absolutely misleading to place a dramatic literature, which is the mere quintessence of the culture of a caste, by the side of one which represents the fullest development of the artistic consciousness of a people such as the Greeks. The Indian drama cannot be described as national in the broadest and highest sense of the word; it is, in short, the drama of a literary class, though as such it exhibits many of the noblest and most refined, as well as the most characteristic features of Hindoo religion and civilization. The ethics of this drama are of a lofty character, but they are those of a scholastic system of religious philosophy, self-conscious of its completeness. To the power of fate is occasionally ascribed a supremacy to which gods as well as mortals must bow;

but if man's present life is merely a phase in the cycle of his destinies, the highest of moral efforts at the same time points to the summit of possibilities, and self-sacrifice is the supreme condition both of individual perfection and of the progress of the world. Such conceptions as these seem at once to enfold and to overshadow the moral life of the Hindoo drama. The affections and passions forming part of self it delineates with a fidelity to nature which no art can neglect; but the freedom of the picture is restricted by conditions which to us are unfamiliar and at times seem intolerable, yet which it was impossible for the poet's imagination to neglect. The sheer self-absorption of ambition or love appears inconceivable to the minds of any of these poets, and their social philosophy is always based on the system of caste. On the other hand, they are masters of many of the truest forms of pathos, above all that which blends with resignation. In humor of a delicate kind they are by no means deficient; to its lower forms they are generally strangers, even in productions of a professedly comic intention. Though a play on words is as the breath of the nostrils, their dramatic literature furnishes hardly any examples of wit, intelligible to Western notions.

The distinctive excellence of the Indian drama is to be sought in the poetic robe which envelops it as flowers overspread the bosom of the earth in the season of spring. In its nobler productions, at least, it is never untrue to its half religious, half rural origin; it weaves the wreaths of idyllic fancies in an unbroken chain, adding to its favorite and familiar blossoms ever fresh

beauties from an inexhaustible garden. Nor is it unequal to depicting the grander aspects of nature in her mighty forests and on the shores of ocean. A profound familiarity with its native literature can alone follow its diction through an easy flow of phrase and figure, listen with understanding to the hum of the bee as it hangs over the lotus, and contemplates with Sakuntala's pious sympathy the creeper as it winds round the mango tree. But the poetic beauty of the Hindoo drama reveals itself in the mysterious charm of its outline, if not in its full glow, even to the untrained; and the study of it should attract the lover of literature.

## V.

### A Romantic Hindoo Drama.

As a specimen of the romantic drama may be outlined the *Vikrama and Urvasi*, or *The Hero and the Nymph*, Kalidasa's masterpiece, which relates the loves of Pururavas and Urvasi, an oft-told tale, but never presented in such interesting form as in the play of the great Hindoo dramatist. Pururavas is the king of Partishthana, and Urvasi is an apsarasa or nymph of Indra's heaven. The scene in the first act is the peaks of the Himalaya; in the second and third, the palace of Pururavas at Partishthana; in the fourth, the forest of Akalusha, and in the fifth, again at the palace. During the prelude, shrieks are heard in the air.

Help, help, if in the middle sky  
A friend be found, to aid us fly!

In the first scene enter in the air a troop of apsarasas, still shrieking for help, and then Pururavas, in a heavenly car, driven by his charioteer. He is a king of high descent, being sprung by his mother, Ila, from the sun, and by his father, Buddha, from the moon.



*Pur.*—Suspend your cries; in me behold a friend,  
Pururavas, returning from the sphere  
Of the wide-glancing sun; command my aid, and tell  
me what you dread.

*Rembha* (a nymph).—A demon's violence.

*Pur.*—What violence presumes the fiend to offer?

*Menaka.*—Great King! it thus has chanced; we measured  
back

Our steps from an assembly of the gods  
Held in Kuvera's hall—before us stepped  
The graceful Urvasi, the nymph whose charms  
Defeated Indra's stratagems, and shamed  
The loveliness of Sri—the brightest ornament  
Of heaven; when on our path the haughty Danava,  
Kesi, the monarch of the Golden city,  
Sprang fierce and tore the struggling nymph away.

Pururavas orders his charioteer to drive him up the mountains and through the clouds in pursuit of the ravisher, while the nymphs await his return with the rescued Urvasi, on the Golden or Snowy peak. In a few moments—for his speed has been as of the lightning—the king reënters his car slowly; Urvasi fainting near his side, supported by her friend Chitralekha.

*Pur.*—Why cherish this alarm  
When its just cause is o'er?  
Unclose those lids,  
The lotus opens when the night retires.

*Chitra.*—Alas! her sighs alone declare her conscious!

*Pur.*—Soft as the flower, the timid heart not soon  
Foregoes its fears—the scarf that veils her bosom  
Hides not its flutterings, and the panting breast  
Seems as if it felt the wreath of heavenly blossoms  
Weigh too oppressively.

*Chitra.*—Revive, my friend!

This weakness ill becomes a nymph of Heaven!  
Awake, dear friend! the enemies of Heaven  
Are baffled in despair.

*Urv.*—(Reviving.) By Indra's prowess.

*Chitra.*—By prowess not inferior to Mahendra's;  
By this most holy prince, Pururavas.

*Urv.*—(Looking at Pururavas; then aside.)  
What thanks I owe the Danava!

Both are smitten. The king is particularly poetical, and the nymph says apart that his delightful words fall like drops of nectar. He tells her that her attendants are watching anxiously on the Golden peak to mark her coming safe from the Demon's grasp: "Like the bright moon emerging from eclipse."

*Rembha.*—Attended by each brilliant star,  
Like Chandra in his radiant car,  
The king appears, and with him borne,  
Behold our sister nymphs return.

*Menaka.*—For both the boons our thanks be poured;  
The prince returned, and friends restored.

*Chorus.*—Joy to the prince who mighty rose  
To quell the pride of demon foes.

*Pur.*—To yonder lofty mountain guide the car.  
(Aside.) Not vain our journey hitherward; 'tis  
much,  
In the unsteady rolling of the chariot,  
But for a moment to have touched the form  
Of this celestial nymph—the blissful contact  
Shoots ecstasy through every fibre. Here (aloud)  
Arrest our course—the maid's companion choir  
Press on to her embrace, like flowery vines  
That bend to catch the beauty of the spring.

In the midst of their congratulations, the sound of mighty chariots is heard—a blaze plays on the towering precipices and enter Chitraratha, the king of the Gandharbas, the male attendants and choristers in the courts of Siva, Indra and Kuvera. He had been sent by Indra to rescue Urvasi from the demon, but having been too late, had returned to the court and now bears Indra's thanks and his wish to see the victorious prince in heaven. All this has happened in shorter time than has been required to write it. After some coy, reluctant, amorous delay, for she has entangled her garland in a struggling vine, and suffers Chitralekha leisurely to disengage it, Urvasi at last ascends after the upward flight of the Gandharbas and Apsarasas, while Pururavas, gazing after her and exclaiming "what idle dreams does frantic love suggest!" mounts his car and disappears.

In Act II the scene is in the garden of the palace of Pururavas at Prayaga, at the confluence of the Yamuna and the Ganges. Enter Manava and the Vidushaka, or buffoon.

*Man.*—It is mighty inconvenient for a Brahman like myself, one so much sought after and subject to much invitation, to be burdened with the king's secret—going so much into company as I do. I shall never be able to set a guard on my tongue. I must be prudent, and will stay here by myself in this retired temple, until my royal friend comes forth from the council chamber. (Sits down and covers his face with his hands.)

Nipunika, an attendant on the queen, steals upon him, soliloquizing about the king, who, she says, is quite

an altered man since he returned from the regions of the Sun, and she wonders what can be the reason. She is not long in learning this from the Vidushaka, is delighted to find there is a nymph in the case, and runs off to comfort the queen with the welcome intelligence. Her place is supplied by no less a personage than Pururavas himself, and an amusing dialogue ensues between him and the Vidushaka about Urvasi. The king is so lost in his passion as to be insensible to the buffoonery of the privileged Brahman, and preserves a most solemn aspect, which contrasts strongly with the mock-majesty of the jester.

*Man.*—The bower of jasmines yonder is studded thick with blossoms, and the bees crowd about them in heaps; it invites your majesty to repose. (They enter the arbor.)

*Pur.*—As you please.

*Man.*—Now, seated in this shade, you may dissipate your cares by contemplating the elegant plants around us.

*Pur.*—How should I learn composure? As my eye rests on the towering trees, and from their tops sees the lithe creeper wave, I call to mind

The graces that surpass its pendulous elegance.

Come, rouse your wit, and friendship may inspire

Some capable expedient to secure me

The object of my wishes—

*Man.*—With all my heart. The thunderbolt was Indra's friend, when he was in love with Ahalya, and I am your adviser, now you are enamoured of Urvasi. We are both of us sapient counsellors.

*Pur.*—Genuine affection ever counsels wisely.

*Man.*—Well, I will turn the matter over in my mind, but you must not disturb my cogitations by your sighs.

*Pur.*—(Feeling his eyes twinkle.)

The moon-faced maid is far beyond my reach!

Then why should love inspire such flattering tokens?  
They teach my mind to feel as if, enjoyed  
The present bliss, hope scarcely dares imagine.

As he ceases speaking, Urvasi and Chitrlekha hover over him in the air. Their colloquy is all of love, and her attendant encourages the nymph to believe that her charms must be victorious. They descend, but conceal themselves in veiling mist—that, lurking unseen, they may overhear what thoughts the king utters in the solitude of the arbor. Then Manava asks his majesty if he heard him observe that he had devised an expedient for securing an interview with his heavenly charmer? Pururavas replies, “Say on—what is it?” And the Vidushaka, looking very wise, continues, “This it is. Let your majesty cherish a comfortable nap, your union will then be affected by your dreams; or delineate a portrait of the lady Urvasi and recreate your imagination by gazing on her picture.” Urvasi is delighted to find Pururavas so enamored of her, and pulling a leaf, she writes upon it and lets it fall—herself still invisible—near the Vidushaka, who picks it up, and intuitively knowing that it could come from nobody but Urvasi, hands it to the king, who exclaims: “Hope dawns upon my passion! Your guess was right.” He then reads aloud—

Not undeserved, although unknown, the flame  
That glows with equal fires in either frame.  
The breeze that softly floats through heavenly bowers,  
Reclined upon my couch of coral flowers,  
Sheds not on me its cool reviving breath  
But blows the hot and scorching gale of death:

O'er all my form the feverish venom flies,  
And each bright bud beneath me droops and dies.

Urvasi now bids Chitralekha reveal herself, not having yet summoned up courage to do so herself; and that nymph finding the king in transports, calls upon his paramour, and she appears before him in all her charms.

*Urv.*—Triumph to the king.

*Pur.*—The wish is victory,

When from the sovereign of the gods transferred  
By lips celestial to a mortal monarch.

(Takes her hand and leads her to a seat.)

*Man.*—Fair lady! I am a Brahman of the king, and his friend, and so may claim some notice. (Urvasi bows to him, smiling.) Prosperity attend you.

(A messenger of the gods in the air.)

*Mess.*—Ho! Chitralekha—Urvasi, repair

Swift to the palace of the Lord of Air  
There your appointed duties to fulfill,  
And give expression to the wondrous skill  
Of Bharata, your master—to the dome  
Divine the world's protecting rulers come,  
Eager to view the scene that genius fires,  
That passion animates, and truth inspires.

A drama by Bharata, the Muni, is about to be acted in the palace of the Lord of the Air, and Urvasi is to appear in the principal female part—to star it in the private theatre of the god. The nymphs obey the mandate, and Pururavas exclaims, "She disappears!" The Vidushaka meanwhile has been so fascinated that he has unconsciously let the leaf with the billet upon it

slip out of his hands, and the pair look for it in vain all around the arbor.

*Pur.*—The sighs that heaved

Her panting bosoms, as she hence departed,  
Exhaled her heart, and lodged it in my bosom;  
Free to dispose of it, although her person  
Be forced to wait upon a master's will.

They retire, and Ausinari, the queen, with Nipunika and attendants enter on the foreground. The queen suspects that something had been happening that is not quite right, and as bad luck would have it, she sees the leaf! Nipunika picks it up, and the cat is let out of the bag. The queen merely says, "We shall confound our nymph-enamored swain." They go around the arbor, and as if playing hide-and-seek, the king and Manava advance, his enamored majesty exclaiming:

Breeze of the South! the friend of Love and Spring,  
Though from the flower you steal the fragrant down  
To scatter perfume—yet why plunder me  
Of those dear characters her own fair hand,  
In proof of her affection, traced? Thou knowest  
The lonely lover that in absence pines  
Living on such fond memorials—it is not  
Thy wont to disregard a lover's suit.

(Ausinari and her train advance.)

*Ausi.*—Nay, my good lord,

I pray you, be consoled, if, as I deem,  
The loss of this occasions your distress.

(Offering the leaf.)

Pururavas has not a word to say for himself, and the Vidushaka makes bad worse by saying to the queen:

"Your grace had better order dinner—that will be the most effectual remedy for his majesty's bile.

*Pur.*—Peace, blockhead, you but heighten my offence.

He then flings himself at Ausinari's feet, and hopes to carry her pardon by a coup-de-main; but in vain.

*Ausi.*—Think me not

So mere a child—that this assumed respect

Beguiles me of my wrath—Away with it—

'Tis gross, my lord, and sits but ill upon you.

I treat such hypocritical penitence

As it deserves. (Spurns him, and exit.)

*Man.*—Her majesty has gone off in a hurry, like a river in the rains. You may rise. (To the king who has continued prostrate.)

*Pur.*—(Rising.) I might have spared myself the pains.

A woman is clear-sighted, and mere words

Touch not her heart.

The first scene of Act III is in the hermitage of Bharata, the Muni, inventor of the drama. From the conversation of two of his disciples we find that Urvasi had broken down in her part in the play in Makendra's palace. Never was there such a failure. The play was *Lakshmi's Choice of a Lord*, and Urvasi enacted Lakshmi. In the Hindoo society of former times it was common for princesses and women of rank to select a husband for themselves. The candidates for the hand of the lady were invited to her father's house, and after previous festivities for some days, were collected in the hall, round which the damsel passed, and chose her future lord by throwing a garland round his neck. In the play Menaka was Varuni, and on saying—



Lakshmi!—the mighty powers that rule the spheres  
Are all assembled; at their head appears  
The blooming Kesva: Confess—to whom inclines your  
heart—

Her reply should have been “to Puru-shotiama,” but instead of that she stammered “Puru-ravas!” The sage, incensed, immediately pronounced a curse “that as she had forgotten her part, so should she be forgotten in heaven.” But Indra, seeing her ashamed and disconsolate, and remembering the effectual aid Pururavas had lent him in conflict with the enemies of the gods, changed the curse into a blessing. The anger of the seer had banished her from heaven, but she might spend her term of exile with the monarch—the period of her banishment to expire when the king shall behold the offspring she shall bear him.

Scene II is in part of the gardens of the palace, and Pururavas and Vidushaka, with female attendants, enter, bearing torches. The king can think but of Urvasi. He sees not the steps of crystal—he hears not the Vidushaka praise the amazing beauty of the pavilion of gems. The moon is about to rise, and Pururavas begins to be at once musical and melancholy as he composes verses on her orb, but the buffoon cuts him short, by describing the ascent of the planet in his own way.

*Man.*—Ho! here he comes, the king of the Brahmans, as beautiful as a ball of almonds and sugar.

*Pur.*—O base similitude!

*Man.*—Enough, sir; your grandfather, without whose consent we Brahmans can do nothing, bids you sit, that he may repose himself.

*Pur.*—The splendor of the moon is light enough—  
Remove the torches, and command my train  
Retire to rest.

Love is all the theme in the imperial moonlit gardens; when, lo! Urvasi and Chitrlekha in their car, hanging over the mirror of the Ganges, but to them invisible. Urvasi is in the purple dress, with pearl ornaments, "the garb of a woman who goes to meet her lover." After some tender talk, they descend, leave the car and proceed toward the pavilion of gems. Urvasi overhears Pururavas giving vent to his passion in poetry, and hastily advancing, she says:

I need no more concealment. Woe is me!  
He deigns not to regard me!

*Chitr.*—In your haste,  
You have forgotten to put off the veil  
That screens you from his sight.  
(Behind.) This way—this way, your grace.  
(All listen. Urvasi throws herself into the arms of  
Chitrlekha.)

*Man.*—The queen is here—we had better be mute.

*Pur.*—Assume the semblance of indifference.

*Urv.*—(To *Chitr.*) What shall we do?

*Chitr.*—Remain invisible.

The queen appears with attendants bearing offerings, herself dressed all in white—flowers her only other ornament. A change has come over the spirit of her dream. She is all meekness, and gazing on the moon exclaims—

This union with the constellation yields  
New brilliance to the lord of Rohini.

Pururavas' self is softened, and seems as if his ancient flame were revived for the gentle Ausinari. Urvasi, in her invisibility, is touched, murmuring—

She merits to be called divine! The bride  
Of Heaven's great King boasts not surpassing  
dignity.

The queen humbly tells his majesty that she has come to observe the Conciliation of Regard, and that she has made a vow to forego her ornaments, and to hold a rigid fast—including abstinence from conjugal endearments—until the moon enters a certain asterism. Pururavas is so charmed that Urvasi, in her turn, is jealous, exclaiming scornfully, "He pays her mighty deference!" Ausinari goes through the usual form of presenting the oblation of fruits, perfumes and flowers, and then asking leave to pay her homage, bows and falls at the feet of her lord and king. She then rises, and breathes a benediction.

Resplendent pair! who o'er the night preside,  
Lord of the Deer-borne banneret, and thou  
His favorite, Rohini, hear and attest  
The sacred promise that I make my husband.  
Whatever nymph attract my lord's regard,  
And share with him the mutual bonds of love,  
I henceforth treat with kindness and complacency.

*Urv.*—Oh! my dear friend, how much the words assuage  
The apprehensions of my heart!

*Chitr.*—She is a lady.

Of an exalted spirit, and a wife  
Of duty most exemplary—you now  
May rest assured, nothing will more impede  
Your union with your love.

Pururavas, wholly overcome by such proofs of affection, tries to persuade Ausinari that she has made him miserable by her vow, and beseeches her to revoke it.

If you please, retain me as your slave.

She answers:

Be what you list,  
My vow is plighted—nor in vain the rite.  
You must excuse me—I may not forego  
The duties I have solemnly incurred.

The forgiving and indulgent queen goes her ways, and Pururavas begins again to dream in the moonlight of the nymph of heaven. He dreams that she steals behind him and spreads a tender veil before his eyes. The utterance of the dream brings its accomplishment. Urvasi advances behind the king and covers his eyes with her hands.

*Pur.*—It must be Urvasi!  
No other hand could shoot such ecstasy  
Through this emaciate frame; the solar ray  
Wakes not the night's fair blossom—that alone  
Expands when conscious of the moon's dear  
presence.

*Urv.*—(Appearing.) Joy to the king!

*Pur.*—All hail, bright nymph of Heaven!  
(Leads her to a seat.)

*Chitr.*—(Advancing.) Be the King blest.

*Pur.*—I feel I am already.

*Urv.*—Hear me, my friend. (To Chitraklekha.) By virtue  
of the gift

Made of his royal person by the queen,  
I boldly claim the king. Do you declare  
If I am reprehensible.

All is rapture—all is bliss. His grandfather, the moon, smiles on Pururavas, and consecrates the espousals. Urvasi tenderly laments she “had caused her lord to suffer pain so long.” He tenderly whispers, “Sweet the joy that follows grief.” The Vidushakha is delighted.

*Man.*—Fate is propitious, and crowns your majesty’s desires.

*Pur.*—’Tis true, I reach the height of my ambition.  
The haughty canopy that spreads its shade  
Of universal empire o’er the world;  
The footstool of dominion set with gems,  
Torn from the glittering brows of prostrate kings,  
Are in my mind less glorious than to lie  
At Urvasi’s fair feet, and do her bidding.

The fourth act is one of the most beautiful of Oriental lyric poems. It is all in one strain—much of it sung, and the rest in recitative—by Pururavas in delirium. But there is method in his madness, and the prevailing link of association and suggestion is a fine and fair one—Urvasi, the Apsarasa, the Nymph of Heaven. Chitrakha tells her sister, Sahajanya, that while Pururavas and Urvasi were wandering in their bliss along the brink of the Mandakini, a nymph of air who was gamboling in the crystal wave, attracted the momentary glance of the monarch, and aroused the jealous wrath

of Urvasi. She disdainfully repelled her lord, and her mind becoming darkened by the curse of the seer, she heedlessly forgot the law that debars all female access to the hateful groves of Karlakeya, and entered the forbidden gloom. Instantly was she transferred to a slender vine, and there she pines till Fate shall set her free. Frantic with sorrow, the king is searching the woods for his lost bride; but never, says Chitralekha, can she be restored to his arms till Pururavas finds the ruby of reunion,

The sacred gem that owes its ruby glow  
To the bright tint of Gauri's sacred feet.

Pururavas is seen rushing through a lonesome part of the forest of Akalusha, on the skirts of the Grand-hamadana, one of the four boundary mountains enclosing the central region of the world called Ilavritta, in which is situated the golden mountain of the gods, or Meru. He is looking up to heaven—his dress disordered, and his general appearance indicative of insanity. His mind is in the past. He believes himself still in pursuit of the demon who is carrying off Urvasi; but it is no demon—only a cloud. He sees a lonely cygnet in the flood, and feels that for his sake drooping is the fair creature's snowy plumage and tears suffusing its eyes! He implores the skies to pity him—yet he “does not tax the elements with unkindness.” All at once he remembers that he is a king. The peacock in its pride is the herald of his honors, the torrents flashing down the rocks praise him from tributary realms—but again he cries—

My sole sad business here  
To thread the woods in search of my beloved!

The bright pendulous flowers, surcharged with dew, remind him of her eyes. The soil softened by showers may retain the delicate impression of her feet! You proud bird, perched on the jutting crag, with neck outstretched and spreading tail, to express his raptures to the clouds, may haply give him intelligence of his Urvasi.

Bird of the dark blue throat and eye of jet,  
Oh, tell me, have you seen the lovely face  
Of my fair bride, lost in this dreary wilderness?  
Her charms deserve your gaze.

But he receives no reply; neither does he learn anything from the royal elephant, the swan, the mountain, of each of whom he inquires after Urvasi, finally turning to the antelope:

A nymph of heaven has left her sphere  
To make a heavenly region here,  
And treads this sacred ground.  
Her slender waist, her swelling hips,  
Her languid eyes, her ruby lips  
With youth unfading crowned.  
O, tell me, through the tangled maze,  
If wondering she has met thy gaze,  
Deer of the soft black eye—  
Ere yet beneath the yawning brink  
Of sorrow's gulf immersed I sink,  
Befriend me, or I die.  
Lord of the bounding herds, say hast thou seen  
My fair, whose large and languid eyes resemble  
Those of thy tender mate? He heeds me not—

But springs to meet his doe. Be happy both,  
Though fate still adverse frown on my desires.

A stream of ruddy radiance now breaks through the cleft rock where he is standing. Is it fire? No flame could have survived the descending torrent. "Is it some sanguine fragment of the lion's feast?" No—'tis a gem! a gem more roseate than the blush of the asoka blossom, and fain would the sun grasp it with his beams. A voice in the air breathes, "Take up the gem, my son! The feet of Nema's holy daughter shed on it a wondrous virtue. Take up the gem, my son, and

The bride will be restored  
To bless her sorrowing and lamented lord."

He obeys the voice.

*Pur.*—What means this strange emotion as I gaze  
Upon this vine—no blossoms deck its boughs;  
Nipped by the falling rains, like briny tears,  
The buds have perished, and the mournful shrub  
All unadorned appears to pine in absence;  
No bees regale her with their songs—but silent  
And sad, she lonely seems, just like the image  
Of my repentant love, who now laments  
Her causeless indignation—I will press  
The melancholy likeness to my heart.

He embraces the vine, which is transformed to Urvasi.

*Urv.*—Glory to the king!  
Let me implore  
Forgiveness, that my causeless wrath has wrought  
So sad a change in you!



Pururavas is now in full possession of all his soul and all his senses, and overwhelms her with his love.

*Urr.*—The king delights to flatter me; but now  
Let us return to Pratishtana;  
The city mourns its absent lord, and I,  
The cause of his departure, shall incur  
The angry censure of the people: come—  
How will it please you travel?

*Pur.*—Yonder cloud  
Shall be our downy car, to waft us swift  
And lightly on our way—

Act V is in the palace of Pururavas. We hear the cry of "the ruby, the ruby!" A hawk, mistaking it for a piece of flesh, has borne it away from the plantain leaf, on which it was for a moment placed along with the lady's robes. The king and his queens had been performing their ablutions where the Yamuna meets the Ganges. Pururavas calls for his bow and arrows, but the hawk flies

Far to the south beyond the arrow's reach—  
Red as asoka flowers, the precious gem  
Graces the sky—with sullen fires it glows  
Like angry Mars, bursting at intervals  
Through the thick clouds that overhang the night.

But the chamberlain enters with an arrow and—the jewel! Characters are inscribed on the arrow, and Pururavas reads in perplexity and astonishment:

"The arrow of the all-subduing Ayus,  
The son of Urvasi and Pururavas.

A female ascetic, Tapasi, enters, followed by a boy with a bow in his hand. The Vidushaka says to the king, "Your perfect image!" Tapasi tells him that the princely youth is indeed the son of Urvasi, and had been for some cause confided, without his father's knowledge, to her secret care. The pious Chyavana had taught him all knowledge worthy his martial birth,

And lastly trained his growing youth to arms.

Her charge had expired—that day's achievement unfits him longer to remain an inmate of the peaceful hermitage. "Monarch, behold thy son!"

The prince advances and prostrates himself. Pururavas raises and embraces him, and places him on a footstool of his throne. Urvasi approaches.

What youth is this, who, in the royal presence,  
Armed with the bow and quiver, honoured sits  
Upon the golden footstool—while the king  
Is fondly playing with his twisted tresses.  
Ha! Satyavati, too! it is my son!  
His growth outstrips my memory.

Ayus, at the command of Tapasi, rises and goes to his mother, who embraces him. All at once Urvasi begins weeping. "Why," fondly breathes Pururavas, "when now I contemplate with ecstasy the proud perpetuation of my race—oh, why

"Should these dear drops in swift succession spread  
A pearly fillet on thy heaving bosom!"

"Alas! my lord," she says, in some such words as these, "happy a while in the sight of this dear boy, I had forgotten the dread decree of Swerga's king, that soon as Pururavas should see a child of ours, must Urvasi return to heaven! Therefore it was that I concealed his birth—that I intrusted him to yonder pious dame to convey him to Chyavana's retreat! Oh, must I indeed part from my lord, the king?"

Pururavas laments that he should have been restored from insanity to suffer even severer woe. He will not immerse himself in cares of state, for fear he might thus less feel the pangs of separation. Back to the deer-trod thickets will he go—and leave his son to wield the sceptre of the world. But the boy wishes he were back at the hermitage, with his favorite peacock. "All unfit," he says, "am I for such a burden."

*Pur.*—Fear it not.

The elephant cub soon tames the forest herds;  
The snake scarce hatched concocts the deadly poison;  
Kings are in boyhood monarchs, and endowed  
With powers inborn to rule the race of men;  
Nature, not age, gives fitness.

(To the chamberlain.)

Our ministers and priests be all prepared  
For this our son's inauguration. Speed.

But it is an ancient and inviolable law of the Hindoo drama that happiness shall illumine the end. It may be "a tale of tears, a mournful story;" but, finally, the rain must be as dew, the clouds dispart and disappear, and all in heaven and on earth be sunshine. The Orientals knew the luxury of grief, but they loved not to be

sent "weeping to their beds." They clung not, like us of the western world, to agony; for their souls were not so strong as ours—nor of frame so sinewy. They acknowledged fate, but shunned its worst catastrophes.

*Pur.*—What sudden splendor breaks, whence are these  
Flashes of lightning in a cloudless sky?

*Urv.*—"Tis Nareda.

*Pur.*—His braided curls are of a golden dye;  
His sacred cord, bright as the silver moon:  
Around his neck, are strings of heavy pearl:  
Like a celestial tree with glittering stem  
He moves: prepare we to receive him.

*Urv.*—Here,

This offering of respect, gathered in haste,  
Present the sage.

(Gives the king some flowers—Nareda descends.)

*Nar.*—Triumph attend

The brave defender of this middle sphere.

*Pur.*—(Presenting the oblation.) Reverence to the sage.

*Urv.*—Accept my homage. (Bows.)

*Nar.*—Never be wife and husband disunited.

*Pur.*—(Aside.) Oh, might this be. (Aloud.) Advance,  
my son, and pay

Your adoration to the holy seer.

*Ayus.*—Ayus, the son of Urvasi, presumes

To pay you homage. (Bows to Nareda.)

*Nar.*—May your days be many—King attend;

The mighty Indra, to whom all is known,

By me thus intimates his high commands.

Forego your purpose of ascetic sorrow.

The sages, to whose wisdom past and future

Are as the present, have foretold at hand

Hostilities in heaven, and the gods will need

Your prowess—then relinquish not your arms;

And Urvasi shall be through life united

With thee in holy bonds.

*Urv.*—These happy words

Extract a barbed arrow from my bosom.

*Pur.*—Whatever Indra wills I shall obey.

*Nar.*—'Tis wisely said, he will not be unthankful.

The fiery element sustains the sun,

The sun returns his rays to nourish fire. (Looking upward.)

Rembha appear, and bring the holy wave

Consigned by Indra to your charge, to consecrate

The prince's elevation to the throne—

As partner of the empire.

(Rembha and other nymphs descend with a golden vase containing the water of the heavenly Ganges, a throne, and other paraphernalia, which they arrange.)

*Rem.*—All is prepared.

*Nar.*—Prince, to your seat.

(Nareda leads Ayus to the throne of inauguration, takes the golden ewer from Rembha, and pours water on the head of the prince.)

Rembha, complete the rite.

(Rembha and the Apsarasas perform the rest of the ceremony.)

*Rem.*—Now, prince, salute your parents and the stage.

(As Ayus bows to them respectively, they reply.)

*Nar.*—Unvarying fortune wait upon thy reign.

*Pur.*—My son, sustain the honors of your lineage.

*Urv.*—My son, be still obedient to thy sire.

Chorus of Bards without.

Glory, all glory, on Ayus attending,

Still in the son we the father may trace;

Justice and valor together extending

The sway of his sceptre and fame of his race—

Son of the monarch the universe filling,

Son of the god of the mist-shedding night,

Son of the sage, whom the great Brahma willing,

Called with creation to life and to light.

## Second Chorus.

Long may the goddess of glory emblazon  
 The diadem raised by your father to fame,  
 Long may the world be delighted to gaze on  
 The fortune allied to your merit and name.  
 Long may the halo of Lakshmi clear glowing  
 Shoot round its splendors unclouded and wide;  
 Like Ganga from snow-crested pinnacles flowing  
 And rolling majestic to ocean's far tide.

*Rem.*—(To Urvasi.) No ordinary fate, dear sister, blesses  
 you with such a son and lord.

*Urv.*—I own my happiness.  
 Come, my dear child, and offer to the queen,  
 Your elder mother, filial homage.

*Pur.*—Hold  
 One moment: we will presently together.

*Nar.*—The splendors of your son's inauguration  
 Bring to my memory the glorious time  
 When Mahasena was anointed chief  
 Of all the heavenly hosts

*Pur.*—To you I owe  
 Such honor.

*Nar.*—Is there aught else Indra can do  
 To serve his friend?

*Pur.*—To hold me in esteem  
 Is all I covet—yet haply may this chance—  
 May learning and prosperity oppose  
 No more each other, as their wont, as foes;  
 But in a friendly bond together twined  
 Ensure the real welfare of mankind.

The intercourse of heroes and goddesses is almost as old as literature itself. It is all one in the Sanskrit, the Greek and the Latin, and no other theme is more pregnant of poetry. Who will not sympathize with the transformation of Urvasi into a vine? She is a charm-

ing creature, and it would be hard to find in Hindoo literature, or, indeed, in any literature, a more beautiful character. Especially attractive does she appear when, in her purple dress, with pearl ornaments, "the garb of a woman who goes forth to meet her lover," she proceeds toward the pavilion of gems, where Pururavas is giving vent to his passion in poetry, while Ausinari, the queen, bestows her benediction on the resplendent pair. But the drama is full of splendor. How beautiful the grouping of the nymphs on the peaks of the Himalaya, and the descent of Nareda through the fields of ether! We shall not praise Pururavas; but Ayus is a fine boy, and his bearing worthy of a prince who is great grandson of the moon.

## VI.

### A Domestic Hindoo Drama.

Of the domestic drama, perhaps the finest specimen is the *Toy-Cart*, of which we have an excellent translation by Horace Hayman Wilson. It is from the original, as is said, of King Sudraka, who terminated a life of the highest political, literary, and religious achievement by entering the sacred fire, as did other sages of olden days. According to some authorities it belongs to the close of the second century of our era, while others assign to it an earlier date; but when and by whomsoever written, it contains a remarkable picture of Indian life and morals. In polygamous countries the poet or novelist, after exciting our interest by two rival heroines in love with one hero, is permitted to marry him to both; and so it is in the *Toy-Cart*, where the lawful wife, though she has prepared a suttee in expectation of her husband's death, submits without apparent reluctance to his union with the real heroine of the play. Though a courtesan, the latter is a wealthy and accomplished woman. Her passion is full of devotion and disinterestedness, resting on her admiration for the noble and virtuous character of the hero, for whom she has re-



jected the king's brother, and who, though sunk in the deepest poverty, is universally esteemed. The plot is lively, and as full of quick and sudden turns as a Spanish comedy.

The play begins with the usual invocation to Siva, after which there is an interlude, a modern interpolation, introduced on the revival of famous plays. In the opening scene the hero, a Brahman named Charudatta, thus, in a manly spirit, laments his poverty, or rather its consequences, of which it would be hard to find a truer description:

I do not, trust me, grieve for my lost wealth;  
But that the guest no longer seeks the dwelling  
Whence wealth has vanished does, I own, afflict me.  
'Tis true, I think not of my wasted fortunes.  
As fate decrees, so riches come and vanish.  
But I lament to find the love of friends  
Hangs all unstrung because a man is poor.  
And then with poverty comes disrespect;  
From disrespect does self-dependence fail;  
Then scorn and sorrow, following, overwhelm  
The intellect; and when the judgment fails,  
The being perishes; and thus, from poverty,  
Each ill that pains humanity proceeds.

In the next scene we are introduced to Vasantasena, the courtesan, persecuted by a persistent but unwelcome suitor, in the person of Samsthanaka, the king's brother. He is attended by a Vita, a character peculiar to the Hindoo drama, and resembling somewhat the parasite of the Greeks, though a man of culture and never playing a contemptible part. As Vasantasena is struggling to escape, the door of Charudatta's house opens, and while

she slips within, a maid comes forth, and in the dark is seized by mistake. The latter is rescued by Maitreya, a friend of Charudatta, who with great spirit asserts the dignity of the Brahman and the inviolability of his mansion, treating the king's brother with scant respect. Even the Vita is inspired with reverence, as appears in the following dialogue :

*Vit.*—I am afraid.

*Sams.*—Of what?

*Vit.*—Of the eminent virtues of Charudatta.

*Sams.*—Very eminent, indeed, when they cannot afford his visitors a dinner.

*Vit.*—Never mind that; he has become impoverished by his liberality, like the pool in the summer, which is exhausted by relieving the thirst of the travellers. In his prosperity he was kind to all.

*Sams.*—Who is this slave? the son of a slave? Is he a warrior? a hero? Is he Pandu? (And so he runs on through the whole list.)

*Vit.*—No, I will tell you who he is. He is Charudatta, the tree of plenty to the poor, bowed down by its abundant fruit. He is the cherisher of the good, the mirror of the wise, a touchstone of piety, the doer of good to all, of evil to none, a treasure of manly virtues, intelligent, liberal, and upright. In the plentitude of his merits he may be said to live; men like us only breathe. But come; we had better depart.

Within the house there is a scene between Charudatta and Vasantasena, conducted with the utmost propriety, the lady leaving in charge of the Brahman a valuable casket of jewels. In the two following acts we see something of low life in India, including an adventure at the door of a gambling-house and a burglary executed with

singular ingenuity, both advancing the story and introducing characters which contribute to the dénouement. A thief has stolen the casket, which has been returned to the dwelling of the courtesan, and Charudatta's friend, Maitreya, is sent with a chain of precious jewels from his wife, to replace the loss, lest her husband's honor should be impeached. Very curious is the description of this modern Aspasia's mansion.

*Att.*—This is the outer door, sir.

*Mait.*—A very pretty entrance, indeed. The threshold is very neatly colored, well swept and watered; the floor is beautiful with strings of sweet flowers; the top of the gate is lofty and the jasmine festoon hangs tremblingly down, as if it were depending from the trunk of Indra's elephant. Over the door is a lofty arch of ivory; above it wave flags dyed with safflower, their fringes curling in the wind like fingers that beckon. On either side, the capitals of the door-posts support elegant crystal flower-pots, in which young mango trees are springing up. The door-panels are of gold, and the whole place seems to cry, "Away!" to a poor man, while its splendor catches the eye.

*Att.*—This leads to the first court. Enter, sir, enter.

*Mait.*—Bless me! Why here is a line of palaces as white as the stalk of the water-lily! Golden steps, set with precious stones, lead to the upper apartments, where crystal windows, festooned with pearls and bright as the eyes of a beautiful maid, look down upon Ujayin. The porter dozes on an easy chair, as stately as a Brahman deep in the Vedas, and the very crows, crammed with rice and curds, disdain the fragments of the sacrifice. Proceed.

*Att.*—This is the second court. Enter.

*Mait.*—Oh! here are the stables. The carriage oxen are sleek and fat, pampered with jawasa, I declare, and straw and oil-cakes are ready for them; their horns are bright with grease. Here we have a buffalo snorting indignantly, like a Brahman of high caste whom somebody has affronted; here the

ram stands to have his neck well rubbed, like a wrestler after a match; here they dress the manes of the horses; here is a monkey tied as fast as a thief; and here the drivers are plying their elephants with balls of rice and ghee.

*Att.*—This, sir, is the third gateway.

*Mait.*—Oh! this is the public court, where the young bucks of Ujayin assemble, and these are their seats, I suppose. The half-read book lies on the gaming-table, the devotees of which are resplendent with jewels. Yonder are some old libertines lounging around; they seem to have pictures in their hands, studying, I suppose, to improve their skill in the peace and war of love. What next?

*Att.*—This is the entrance to the fourth court.

*Mait.*—Oh, ho! this is a very gay scene. Here the drums, while beaten by taper fingers, emit, like clouds, a murmuring; there the cymbals, beating time, flash as they descend, like the unlucky stars that fall from heaven. The flute here breathes the soft hum of the bee; whilst here a damsel holds the vina in her lap, and frets its wires with her finger-nails, like some wild minx that sets her mark on the face of her offending swain. Some damsels are singing, like so many bees intoxicated with flowery nectar; others are practising the graceful dance; and others are employed in reading plays and poems. The place is hung with water-jars to catch the cooling breeze. What comes next?

*Att.*—This is the gate of the fifth court.

*Mait.*—Oh, how my mouth waters! what a savory scent of oil and asafoetida! The kitchen sighs softly forth its fragrant and abundant smoke: the odors are delicious; they fill me with rapture. The butcher's boy is washing the skin of an animal just slain. The cook is surrounded with dishes; the sweetmeats are mixing; the cakes are baking. (*Aside.*) O, that I could meet with some one to do me a friendly turn! one who would wash my feet and say, "Eat, sir, eat!" This is certainly Indra's heaven.

*Att.*—This is the sixth entry.

*Mait.*—The arched gateway is of gold and many colored gems on a ground of sapphire, and looks like the bow of Indra

on an azure sky. What is going forward here so busily? This is the jeweller's court; skilful artists are examining pearls, topazes, sapphires, emeralds, rubies, the lapis-lazuli; some pierce shells, and some cut coral; there we have perfumers drying the saffron-bags, shaking the musk-bags, expressing the sandal juice, and compounding essences. Whom have we here? Fair damsels and their gallants, laughing, talking, chewing musk and betel, and drinking wine. Here are the male and female hangers-on, men that neglected their own families and spent their all upon the harlot, and are now glad to quaff the drainings of her wine cup.

*Att.*—This is the seventh court. *Enter.*

*Mait.*—This is the aviary; very handsome, indeed. The doves bill and coo in comfort; the pampered parrot, stuffed with curds and rice, croaks like a Brahman pundit chanting a hymn from the Vedas; the maina chatters as glibly as a housemaid, issuing her mistress' commands to her fellow-servants; while the koil, crammed with juicy fruit, whines like a water-carrier; the qualls fight; the partridges cry; the domestic peacock dances about delighted and fans the palace with his gem-embazoned tail, as if to cool its heated walls; the swans, like balls of moonlight, roll about in pairs, and follow each graceful maid as if to learn to imitate her walk; while the long-legged cranes stalk about the court, like eunuchs on guard; some birds are hung in cages, either carried about or suspended from the balconies; so that the lady lives here among the winged race, as if she tenanted Indra's garden. Well, where do you go now?

*Att.*—Enter, sir, the eighth court.

We are here introduced to the brother and the mother of the fair mistress, who seem to live very comfortably in this questionable establishment.

*Mait.*—A very lovely scene: the numerous trees are bowed down by delicious fruit, and between them are silken swings constructed for the light form of youthful beauty; the yellow

jasmine, the graceful malati, the full-blossomed malleka, the blue clitoria, spontaneous shed their flowers and strew the ground with a carpet more lovely than any in the groves of Indra; the reservoir glows with the red lotus blossoms like the dawn with the fiery beams of the rising sun, and here the asoka tree, with its rich crimson blossoms, shines like a young warrior bathed with the sanguine shower of the furious fight.

As a specimen of poetry may now be given a scene from nature, completely Indian in all its features. Vasantasena, attended by the Vita, pays a visit to the Brahman, and is overtaken by a storm:

*Vas.*—The purple lightning darts such brilliant rays,  
As gleam from golden lamps, in temples hung;  
While, like the consort of an humble lord,  
The timid moonlight peeps amid the clouds.

*Vit.*—There, like a string of elephants, the clouds  
In regular file by lightning fillets bound,  
Move slowly at the potent god's commands.  
The heavens let down a silver chain to earth;  
The earth that shines with buds and sheds sweet  
odors  
Is pierced with showers, like diamond-shafted darts,  
Launched from the rolling mass of deepest blue,  
Which heaves before the breeze, and foams with  
flame;  
Like ocean's dark waves by the tempest driven,  
And tossing high their flashing surge to shore.

*Vas.*—Yonder rests one threatening cloud  
Involving all the atmosphere in gloom.

*Vit.*—The countenance of heaven is close concealed,  
By shades the lightning scant irradiates;  
The day and night confusedly intermix  
And all the lotus eyes of ether close.  
The world is lulled to slumber by the sound  
Of falling waters, sheltered by the clouds  
That countless crowd the chambers of the sky.

*Vas.*—The stars are all extinct, as fades the memory  
 Of kindness in a bad man's heart. The heavens  
 Are shorn of all their radiance, as the wife  
 Her glory loses in her husband's absence.  
 In sooth, I think the firmament dissolves:  
 Melted by Indra's scorching bolt, it falls  
 In unexhausted torrents. Now the cloud  
 Ascends—now stoops—now roars aloud in thunder—  
 Now sheds its streams—now frowns with deeper  
     gloom,—  
 Full of fantastic change, like one new raised  
 By fortune's fickle favors.

*Vit.*—Now the sky  
 With lightning gleams—now laughs with whitening  
     storks—  
 Now glows with Indra's painted bow, that hurls  
 Its hundred shafts—now rattles with his bolt—  
 Now loud it chafes with rushing winds—and now  
 With clustering clouds, that roll their spiry folds,  
 Like sable snakes, along, it thickens dark,  
 As if 'twere clothed with vapors, such as spread  
 . When incense soars in curling wreaths to heaven.

*Vas.*—Shame on thee, cloud! that seekest to affright me!  
 With thy loud threats, and with thy watery shafts,  
 Wouldst stay my progress, hastening to my love?  
 Indra, I violate no vows to thee,  
 That thou shouldst thunder angrily reproof.  
 It ill becomes thee to obstruct my path.  
 Draw off thy clouds, in pity to my passion.

The friendship between the Brahman and the devoted Vasantasena is no sooner established than it suffers a fatal reverse. They agree to meet in a public garden, in the outskirts of the city, and Charudatta's carriage is at the door to convey the lady. At that instant the insurgent Aryaka rushes in, pursued by the king's

guards, and leaps into the carriage, which drives off. At the same time the chariot of the king's brother is stopped at the same door, and into this the lady unwittingly enters. On her arrival at the garden, she discovers that she has fallen into the hands of her importunate but odious admirer; and as she scornfully rejects his advances, this cruel prince, notwithstanding the remonstrance of the Vita, strangles her with his own hands, and leaves her, as he supposes, dead. She is restored to life by a Buddhist devotee, whom, in the early part of the play, her generosity had rescued from difficulties, and enabled to renounce the world.

The ninth act opens with the meeting of the court of justice, before which the king's guilty brother appears, and denounces Charudatta as the murderer of Vasantasena. The reverence of the judges for his character and his own defence are in vain, though he takes a high tone of vindication.

*Charudatta.*—The wretch that sickens at another's merits,  
The mind by passion blinded, bent to ruin  
The object of its malice, do not claim  
Reply, nor any heed to what they utter,  
Which, from their very nature, must be falsehood.  
For me—you know me! Would I pluck a flower,  
I draw the tender creeper gently to me,  
Nor rudely rob it of its clustering beauty.  
How think you, then, could I with violent hands  
Tear from their lovely seat those jetty locks,  
More glossy than the black bee's wing? or how  
So wrong my nature, and betray my love,  
As, with remorseless heart, to blast in death  
The weeping charms that vainly sued for mercy?



The circumstantial evidence, however, is so strong against him that, in the last act, he is led forth to death by two executioners. As he passes he observes,

From every window lovely faces shed  
The kindly drops, and bathe me with their tears.

His sentence is read with all its terrible formality.

*Charudatta*.—Dreadful reverse to hear such wretches herald

My death, and blacken thus with lies my fame;  
Not so my sires—for them the frequent shout  
Has filled the sacred temple, where the crowd  
Of holy Brahmans to the gods proclaimed  
The costly rite accomplished; and shall I,  
Alas, Vasantasena, who have drunk  
Thy nectar'd tones, from lips whose ruby glow  
Disgraced the coral, and displayed the charms  
Of teeth more pearly than the moon's chaste light,  
Profane my ears with such unworthy draughts,  
Or stain my unslaved spirit with the pledge  
Of poison, brewed by infamy and shame?

An affecting parting with his child follows; it ends with these words, as he embraces the boy:

This is the truest wealth; love equal smiles  
On poor and rich: the bosom's precious balm  
Is not the fragrant herb, nor costly unguent,  
But nature's breath, affection's holy perfume.

At the instant before execution, Vasantasena appears. Tidings arrive that the insurgent Aryaka has dethroned the reigning king. Charudatta is just in time to prevent his wife from mounting the fatal pile,

on which she is preparing to burn herself, notwithstanding her husband's well-known passion for the other lady. This Hindoo Griselda receives the fair courtesan as her sister, that is, as her husband's second wife. The new king, in honor of her worth, requests her acknowledgment as a kinswoman, and a veil is thrown over her head to betoken her abandonment of her former life. And so ends this remarkable picture of Oriental manners.

## VII.

### Persia and the Orient.

Oriental life and society, especially in southern countries, stand in violent contrast with the multitudinous detail and the vast average of comfort among western nations. Life in the East is short, hazardous, intense, and with the greatest possible extremes of poverty and wealth. Its elements are few and simple, without the endless gradations of European existence, but rapidly reaching the best and the worst. The rich feed on fruits and game,—the poor, on a watermelon's rind. All or nothing is the genius of Oriental life. Favor of the sultan, or his displeasure, is a question of fate, and a war is undertaken for a distich, as in Europe for a duchy. The tropical sun, and the sudden and rank plenty which his heat engenders, make subsistence easy; on the other hand, the desert, the simoom, the mirage, the lion, and the plague endanger it, and life hangs on the contingency of a skin of water more or less. The very geography of old Persia showed these contrasts. "My father's empire," said the younger Cyrus to Xenophon, "is so large that people perish with cold at the north, while they are suffocated with heat at the south."

The temperament of the people agrees with this life in extremes. Religion and poetry are all their civilization. The religion teaches an inexorable destiny. It distinguishes only two days in each man's history: his birthday, called the day of the lot, and the day of judgment. Courage and absolute submission to what is appointed him are his virtues. Social conditions, occupation and natural environment are factors in encouraging and sustaining the religious sentiment of the people.

The favor of soil and climate, causing the earth to yield its fruits abundantly, and encouraging an out-door life, are favorable to physical and intellectual development. As with the Hindoos, the Persians and Arabs, with abundant leisure and few books, are exquisitely sensible to the pleasure of poetry. Layard, the explorer of Nineveh, relates the effect which the *improvisatori* produce on the children of the desert. "When the bard improvised an amatory ditty, the young chief's excitement was almost beyond control. The other Bedouins were scarcely less moved by these rude measures, which have the same kind of effect on the wild tribes of the Persian mountains. Such verses, chanted by their self-taught poets, or by the girls of their encampment, will drive warriors to the combat, fearless of death, or prove an ample reward, on their return from the dangers of the fight. The excitement they produce exceeds that of the grape. He who would understand the influence of the Homeric ballads in the heroic ages should witness the effect which similar compositions have upon the wild nomads of the East." Elsewhere he adds, "Poetry and flowers are the wine and spirits of the Arab; a couplet

is equal to a bottle, and a rose to a dram, without the evil effect of either."

### National Poetry.

Persian poetry rests on a mythology whose few legends are connected with the Jewish history, and the anterior traditions of the Pentateuch. The principal figure in the allusions of Persian poetry is Solomon. Solomon had three talismans: first, the signet ring, by which he commanded the spirits, and on the stone of which was engraven the name of God; second, the glass, in which he saw the secret of his enemies, and the causes of all things; the third, the east wind, which was his horse. His counsellor was Simorg, king of birds, the all-wise fowl, who had lived ever since the beginning of the world, and now lives alone on the highest summit of Mount Kaf. No fowler has taken him and none now living has seen him. By him Solomon was taught the language of birds, so that he heard secrets whenever he went into his gardens. When Solomon travelled, his throne was placed on a carpet of green silk, of a length and breadth sufficient for all his army to stand upon,—men placing themselves on his right hand, and the spirits on his left. When all were in order, the east wind, at his command, took up the carpet, and transported it, with all that were upon it, whither he pleased,—the army of birds at the same time flying overhead, and forming a canopy to shade them from the sun. It is related that, when the queen of Sheba came to visit Solomon, he had built, against her arrival, a palace, of which the

floor or pavement was of glass, laid over running water, in which fish were swimming. The queen was deceived thereby, and raised her robes, thinking she was to pass through the water. On the occasion of Solomon's marriage, all the beasts, laden with presents, appeared before his throne. Behind them came the ant with a blade of grass: Solomon did not despise the gift of the ant. Asaph, the vizier, at a certain time, lost the seal of Solomon, which one of the Dews, or evil spirits, found, and, governing in the name of Solomon, deceived the people.

As to the origin of the national poetry of Persia there is much difference of opinion; but to the Sasanian monarch Bahram V, who reigned between 420 and 439 A. D., is commonly ascribed the invention of metre and rhyme, while by other Sasanian rulers literature was freely encouraged. According to the oldest of biographical writers, the first real poem in modern Persian was composed in 809, in honor of Mamun, son of Harun al Rashid. But the early growth of Persian poetry was slow; for the Arabic language had gained too firm a footing to be readily supplanted by a literature still in its infancy. Even among the few and fragmentary verses of the earlier poets may be traced, however, the principal forms of poetry now in use; the ode, in the shape of a love-ditty, wine song, or religious hymn, and others corresponding to epic, didactic and satirical poems. In writings of a religious character may be noticed the same tendency as in later productions, to amalgamate the enforced doctrines of Islam with Aryan sentiments and to reconcile the strict deism of the

Mahometan faith with the more or less pantheistic ideas of the disciples of Zoroaster.

### Dakiki and Firdausi.

Beginning with the latter half of the tenth century, when we enter upon the golden era of Persian literature, native poetry became extremely abundant, and so continued into the present age, the *Treasure of Marvellous Matters*, published about 1803, containing the biographies of more than three thousand poets, with specimens from their works. By order of Mansur I. was translated from the Arabic the Universal History of Tabari, and this, the oldest prose writing in modern Persian, published about 963, is still regarded as a classic, on account of its easy and graceful style. By his son and successor, a man full of enthusiasm for the glorious annals of the old Iranian kingdom, Dakiki, his court poet, was ordered to translate into Persian verse the Parsi collection of legends and traditions of the heroic ages of Iran. Soon after beginning his work, Dakiki was assassinated; but the task was completed by a still abler writer, in the person of Firdausi, who after thirty-five years of incessant toil, wrote the last distichs of the famous *Shah-nama*. This has been termed by Sir William Jones "a glorious monument of oriental genius and learning, which, if it should ever be commonly read in its original language, will contest the palm of invention with Homer himself." It is a characteristic of oriental compilers, translators and authors, especially when obeying the mandates of rulers

and building up permanent public records, to exhibit a greater degree of patience, industry and learning than we are apt to find in other branches of literature.

### *The Shah-nama.*

The *Shah-nama* deals with the annals of the mythical and heroic kings of the country: of Karun, the Persian Croesus, the immeasurably rich gold-maker, who, with all his treasures, lies buried not far from the Pyramids, in the sea which bears his name; of Jamschid, the binder of demons, whose reign lasted seven hundred years; of Kai Kaus, whose palace was built by demons on Alberz, in which gold and silver and precious stones were used so lavishly, such being the brilliancy produced by their combined effect that night and day appeared the same; of Afrasiyab, strong as an elephant, whose shadow extended for miles, whose heart was bounteous as the ocean, and his hands like the clouds when rain falls to gladden the earth. The crocodile in the rolling stream was not secure from Afrasiyab; yet when he came to fight against the generals of Kaus, he was but an insect in the grasp of Rustem, who seized him by the girdle, and dragged him from his horse. Rustem felt such anger at the arrogance of the king of Mazinderan, that every hair on his body started up like a spear. In a *Shah-nama* of a much later date and by another author is a poetical history of the Shahs Ismail and Tahmasp; in a third are related the exploits of Abbas the great; and even the atrocities of Timur and the cruelties of Nadir Shah have been chronicled in epic verse.



But the national epic, with its legitimate and illegitimate offspring, is not the only bequest that Firdausi left to his country. It was he who gave the first impulse to the higher development in other forms of poetic art, which were to flourish in later times, and especially to the romantic, didactic and mystic, even his own age producing some who excelled in these departments. Though Unsuri was the court poet, Firdausi was the central sun around which revolved the four hundred minor stars who formed the "Table round" in the magnificent palace of Mahmud of Ghazna, whose empire extended from the Caucasus to Bengal and from Bokhara to the Indian ocean. Nizami, who has given us some fine descriptions of the struggles and passions of the human heart, owes much to the love stories of the *Shah-nama*. Such, indeed, was the fascination of that epic that, from its first appearance, there was a keen competition among the younger poets as to who should produce the best imitation, and, under various forms, this competition has lasted unto the present day. It is safe to say it will continue for an indefinite period, for, while spirited in all respects, it has ever been carried on with fairness and intellectual profit.

Among the latest productions of Firdausi was one dealing with the Biblical story of Joseph, which now for the first time received poetic treatment, and proved an attractive theme to other writers of epic verse. Unsuri's romance of *Wamik u Adhra* is based on a popular Iranian legend of great antiquity and has been a favorite subject for modern poets. Of equal antiquity is Jurjani's love-story, *Wis u Ramin*, a poem of great artistic

value, and resembling closely *Tristan und Isolde*, one of the epic masterpieces of mediæval German literature.

### Didactic and Mystic Poetry.

To Firdausi may also be traced the origin of didactic and mystic poetry, of which the earliest specimens date from the twelfth century; for in the *Shahnama* is not only a strong didactic element but the mystical tendency which has since pervaded the literary productions of Persia. In numerous verses are allusions to the Sufic pantheism, which strives to reconcile philosophy with revealed religion, and centres in the doctrine of the universality and absolute unity of God, who is diffused through every particle of the visible and invisible world, and to whom the human soul, during its temporary exile in the prison-house of the body, strives to return, through progressive stages, till it is sufficiently purified to be again absorbed in him from whom it came. Often does the poet cry out against the vanity of all earthly joys and pleasures, expressing a passionate desire for a better home, or for a reunion with the Godhead. In one of the most striking passages of the great epic is described the mysterious disappearance of Shah Kaikhosrau, who, when at the height of his fame and splendor, suddenly renounces the world in utter disgust, and, carried away by his fervent longing for an abode of everlasting tranquility, vanishes forever from the midst of his companions.

The *Book of Enlightenment*, by Khosrau, is full of sound moral and ethical maxims, with slightly mystical

tendencies. In the *Garden of Truth*, by Hakim Sanai, is one of the earliest of Sufic text-books, referred to by all the later poets of this sect as an unrivalled exposition of spiritual knowledge. In its ten cantos is skillfully blended the purely didactic element, enhanced by pleasant stories and anecdotes, with the principal tenets of theosophy. One of the greatest pantheistic writers of all ages was Farid-uddin Attar, who after renouncing all worldly affairs, and performing a pilgrimage to Mecca, devoted himself to a stern ascetic life, and to the composition of Sufic works. Among his prose writings is the valuable *Biography of Eminent Mystic Divines*, and foremost among his poems are the *Book of Counsels* and *Bird Conversations*. The latter is an allegorical poem, interspersed with moral stories and pious contemplations, all ingeniously illustrating the final absorption of the Sufi in the deity, while the seven valleys through which the birds are made to travel, on their way to the fabulous phoenix, or simurg, are the seven stations of the mystic road that leads from earthly troubles to the much coveted Nirvana.

### Lyric Poetry.

Lyric poets, pure and simple, are numbered by the hundred, all of them singing in endless strains the pleasures of love and wine, the beauties of nature, and the almighty power of the Creator. There are the legends of Chiser, the fountain of life, of Tuba, the tree of life, the romances of the loves of Leila and Medjun, of Chosru and Schirin, and those of the nightingale

for the rose, of pearl-diving, and the virtues of gems, the cohool, a cosmetic by which pearls and eyebrows are indelibly stained black, the bladder in which musk is brought, the down of the lip, the mole on the cheek, the eyelash, lilies, roses, tulips, and jasmines, all helping to form the staple imagery of Persian odes. But it was reserved for the incomparable genius of Hafiz to give to the world some of the most perfect models of lyric composition, and after his death, near the close of the fourteenth century, the lines which he laid down were followed by countless imitators.

The Persians have epics and tales, but for the most part they affect short poems and epigrams. Gnostic verses, rules of life, conveyed in a lively image, especially in an image addressed to the eye, and contained in a single stanza, were always current in the East; and if the poem is long it is only a string of unconnected verses. They use an inconsecutiveness quite alarming to Western logic, and the connection between the stanzas of their longer odes is much like that between the refrain of old English ballads.

Take as specimens of these gnostic verses the following:

The secret that should not be blown  
Not one of thy nation must know;  
You may padlock the gate of a town,  
But never the mouth of a foe.

Or this of Enweri:

On prince or bride no diamond stone  
Half so gracious ever shone,

As the light of enterprise  
Beaming from a young man's eyes.

Or this of Ibn Jemin:

Two things thou shalt not long for, if thou love a life serene:  
A woman for thy wife, though she were a crowned queen;  
And, the second, borrowed money, though the smiling lender  
say  
That he will not demand the debt until the judgment day.

Or this on friendship:

He who has a thousand friends has not a friend to spare,  
And he who has one enemy shall meet him everywhere.

Hafiz, as before remarked, is the prince of Persian epic poets, and in his extraordinary gifts adds to some of the attributes of Pindar, Anacreon, Horace and Burns, the insight of a mystic that sometimes affords a deeper glance at Nature than belongs to any of these bards. He accosts all topics with an easy audacity. "He only," he says, "is fit for company who knows how to prize earthly happiness at the value of a nightcap. Our father Adam sold Paradise for two kernels of wheat; then blame me not if I hold it dear at one grapestone."

### *The Song of Seid Nimetollah.*

Among the religious customs of the dervises is an astronomical dance, in which the dervis imitates the movements of the heavenly bodies by spinning on his own axis, whilst, at the same time, he revolves round

the sheikh in the centre, representing the sun, and as he spins he sings the song of Seid Nimetollah of Kuhistan:

Spin the ball! I reel, I burn,  
Nor head from foot can I discern,  
Nor my heart from love of mine,  
Nor the wine-cup from the wine.  
All my doing, all my leaving,  
Reaches not to my perceiving.  
Lost in whirling spheres I rove,  
And know only that I love.

I am seeker of the stone,  
Living gem of Solomon;  
From the shore of souls arrived,  
In the sea of sense I dived;  
But what is land, or what is wave  
To me who only jewel crave?  
Love's the air-fed fire intense,  
My heart is the frankincense;  
As the rich aloe's flames, I glow,  
Yet the censer cannot know.  
I'm all-knowing, yet unknowing;  
Stand not, pause not, in my going.

Ask not me, as Muftis can,  
To recite the Alcoran;  
Well I love the meaning sweet,—  
I tread the book beneath my feet.

Lo! the God's love blazes higher,  
Till all difference expire.  
What are Moslems? what are Giaours?  
All are Love's, and all are ours.  
I embrace the true believers,  
But I reckon not of deceivers.  
Firm to heaven my bosom clings,  
Heedless of inferior things;  
Down on earth, there, under foot,  
What men chatter know I not.

Here ends the song, which, as is usual with Persian verse, is of a high imaginative and amatory character.

### *The Religious Drama.*

Turning to the dramatic poetry of Persia, it may first be remarked that, while the drama proper dates only from the beginning of the nineteenth century, its source may be traced back for many hundreds of years. Like that of the Greeks, it is essentially of religious origin, the offspring of a purely religious ceremony, which, for many centuries, has been annually performed in the sacred month of Moharrem. The ceremony takes the form of mourning and lamentation in memory of the tragic fate of the house of the caliph Ali, the hero of the Shiah Persians. The performances are analogous to European passion-plays, dealing exclusively with the martyrdom of Ali's son, Hossein, who, with his family, was massacred at the battle of Kerbela. Within recent years, however, the range of this drama has been considerably extended, and Biblical stories and Christian legends have been incorporated. The secular drama has only lately been admitted to Persia. While it attracts crowds, it is looked upon with disfavor by the religious leaders of the people. The national drama is still the religious play.

Tradition states that, during the brief Deilamee dynasty, about 923 to 986, the practice began of commemorating the events in the history of the Shiah sect by recitations, in the form of religious rhapsodies, from pulpits erected in the public squares or in the residences

of the chief dignitaries, during the three months accounted holy by the Shiah. These recitations varied according to the enthusiasm, the imagination, or the talent of the speaker; they were called *Rhozeh*, and continue in force to the present day, halls being especially constructed for the purpose. But the zeal of the *Sufavees*, aided as it was by an opulence and splendor which rendered the reigns of *Shah Abbas the Great* and his successors proverbial, piously suggested more pomp and circumstance in the commemoration of the martyrdom of the saints of the Shiah faith.

### *The Sacred Months.*

There is for all Mohammedans alike a sacred month devoted to an ordeal of fasting from sunrise to sunset. It consists in abstaining, not merely from certain articles of food, but from every form of nourishment or stimulant, including water and smoking, for the entire day. In summer the ordeal is, indeed, one of the most trying ever intended for the torture of man. The fast is called the *Ramazán*, and in order to sustain the faith and fortitude of true believers at this season, the Shiah allow representations of the *Tazieh* and the exhortations of the *Rhozeh* during that month. But the usual time for these representations is during the two holy months of *Moharrem* and *Safar*, in which the expounders of the *Ali* sect have contrived to bring closely together a number of important and significant events. Among them are the deaths of *Hasan* and of *Hossein*, the birth of the prophet *Mohammed*, the martyrdom of



the Imam Rezah, and the death of Fatimah, the favorite daughter of Mohammed.

A month before Moharrem occurs the solemn festival of Courban Bairan, or the "feast of the sacrifice," in which the chief ceremony is the slaughter of the camel, and this is celebrated in every city of Persia.

The month of mourning brings a practical cessation of all but the most important labor. Business in the bazaars nearly comes to a stop, and as evening approaches, the wild shout of the processions of fanatics may be heard from all parts of the city. The first ten days of Moharrem are especially devoted to the commemoration of the massacre of Hossein and his family; but it is not until the last four or five days of this period that these processions, called *testeh*, become so demonstrative as to prove a disturbing element. During the last two or three days of this public demonstration it is considered prudent for all foreigners and unbelievers to attract as little attention as possible, lest, if seen by these excited throngs, they be insulted or even assailed by some of the mob, now frenzied by religious excitement to an extraordinary degree.

### *The Persian Passion-Play.*

But every circumstance connected with this commemorative period of public lamentation is quite subordinate, and as it were subsidiary, to the *Tazieh*, or dramatic representation of the tragedy which involved the descendants of Ali and Fatimah in one common catastrophe. In all parts of Persia this tragedy is re-

produced during the sacred months of mourning; but one must see the performance represented under royal patronage, and honored by the Shah himself and the royal family, in order to understand the varied character and significance of a drama in which the combined religious and patriotic fervor of a great sect and people finds its most ample expression.

It is not easy for those of other beliefs to gain access to the royal Takieh, as the building is called where the drama of the *Tazieh* is unfolded for ten successive days. While the leading purpose of the *Tazieh* is to represent the slaughter of Hossein, the son of Ali, and his family, the chief incidents of this event are not always represented in the order in which they occurred. In several instances episodes are placed on the stage which happened after the final catastrophe. The solemnity of the occasion, and the monotony which might occur from twenty successive acts played in the afternoon and evening of ten consecutive days, is also relieved by occasional episodes having but a remote relation to the chief events of the drama. Thus alternately entertained or aroused to profound emotion, the audience is carried easily along from scene to scene until the tenth day, called the "day of slaughter," when Hossein is slain, at which time the excitement of the audience, and in fact of the entire city, reaches a point bordering on frenzy.

#### *The Royal Theatre.*

Mr. S. G. W. Benjamin, who went in 1882 as the first United States Minister to Persia, witnessed the

play at the Shah's Theatre in Teheran. To disarm the prejudices of the Mohammedans he wore the tall black conical hat of dyed sheepskin worn in public by Persian gentlemen. He thus describes the theatre: "I was surprised to see an immense circular building as large as the amphitheatre of Verona, solidly constructed of brick. Ferashes, or liveried footmen, cleared the way before us. Thrashing with their staves right and left, they opened a way through the crowd that packed the great portal, and entering a dark, vaulted vestibule, I groped, or rather was impelled by the throng, toward a staircase crowded with servants, whose masters had already arrived. Like all stairs in Persia, these were adapted to the stride of giants. A succession of springs upward finally landed me on the first gallery, which led around the building. A few steps in the twilight, and then an embroidered curtain was raised and I entered the box of the Zahir-i-Douleh, a son-in-law of the Shah. It was in two parts, the first higher than the other; stepping into the front and lower division, I was invited to recline at the left of my host upon a superbly embroidered cushion of velvet, this being the seat of honor. The walls of the loggia were of plain brick, but they were hung with cashmere shawls of great price, and the choicest of rugs enriched the floor. A number of Persian gentlemen of lower rank occupied the back part of the apartment by invitation; all alike were seated on their knees and heels, a most painful position for one not accustomed to it from infancy. I was obliged to compromise by sitting cross-legged, Turkish fashion. It is worthy of notice that a

nearly life-size portrait of Mahomet hung on the wall. Of course it was an imaginary likeness, and the prophet himself, who denounced paintings of any object having life, would have condemned its appearance there; but the Persians, having a marked aptitude for the fine arts, have found means of explaining away the precepts of their religious founder, when it has suited their tastes and convenience to do so. The prophet was represented as a handsome man in the prime of life, with ruddy and sensuous rather than reflective features. On his head was a green turban; he was seated cross-legged, with a naked scimitar across his knees.

"On looking forth over the vast arena a sight met my gaze which was indeed extraordinary. The interior of the building is nearly two hundred feet in diameter and some eighty feet high. A domical frame of timbers, firmly spliced and braced with iron, springs from the walls, giving support to the awning that protects the interior from the sunlight and the rain. From the centre of the dome a large chandelier was suspended, furnished with four electric burners—a recent innovation. A more Oriental form of illuminating the building was seen in the prodigious number of lustres and candlesticks, all of glass and protected from the air by glass shades open at the top and variously colored; they were concentrated against the wall in immense glittering clusters. Estimating from those attached to one box, I judged there were upward of five thousand candles in these lustres.

"The arrangement of the boxes, or more strictly loggias, was peculiar. The walls nowhere indicated any

serious attempt at decoration, except a string-course of brick and gilded Saracenic cornices over the arched loggias. Nor was there any regularity of design in the details, such as gives majesty to the arrangement of the galleries in Roman amphitheatres. And yet the general effect was picturesquely grand, as if the architect was so conscious that by merely following the arrangement suggested by the aim in view he would achieve a noble architectural expression, that he disdained to depend on anything but the constructive details to justify his genius. For example, one side of the loggia of the Shah, boldly disregarding symmetry, raised the arch of its broad window to twice the dimensions of the neighboring loggias. Opposite again was a row of loggias associated together by a line of semi-Saracenic archivolt over the windows, which were completely concealed by a green lattice and framed with mouldings painted green and gold; these were appropriated to the wives of the Shah. Midway between these two divisions was still another group of latticed windows, and opposite to them, in turn, was a deep arched loggia resembling a reception-room, quite two stories in height, intended for a daughter of the Shah. As she did not occupy it when I was there, the gauze-like drapery was raised, displaying still another likeness of the prophet. As if to prevent monotony from too symmetrical a design, the entrances to the floor or pit differed in width, the widest being some twenty-five feet, while the arched roofs extended to a height of thirty and forty feet respectively. These vaulted passages, being of course pierced through the walls, gave a means for gauging

the vast solidity of the structure, the walls being nearly fifty feet in thickness on the ground, thus adding wonderfully to the really grand effect of this stupendous structure."

"If this royal theatre of Teheran were of polished marble, like the amphitheatres of old, it would scarcely yield to them in the beauty and impressiveness of its interior. Especially is to be noticed the masterly arrangement of the arches to produce strength and beauty alike. In the centre of the arena of the Tazieh was a circular stage of masonry, raised three feet and approached by two stairways. On one side of the building a pulpit of white marble was attached to the wall, of the form universally followed in Mahometan countries; that is, a lofty, narrow flight of steps protected by a solid balustrade on each side, and terminating in a small platform. The speaker has no other platform than the upper step, which is crowned with a canopy, and according as the spirit moves him he occupies various steps of this pulpit platform. The spiritual exaltation, or the age and rank of the speaker, suggests from what elevation he shall exhort the people seated on the pavement below him."

#### *A Persian Audience.*

But still more remarkable is the extraordinary spectacle offered by the assembled multitude. The entire arena, with the exception of a narrow passage around the stage, is absolutely packed with women, three or four thousand in number and seated cross-legged on the earthen floor, which is slightly sloping, in order to en-

able those in the rear to see over the heads of those before them. They are uniformly dressed in blue-black mantles, each having a white veil drawn tightly over the head and face, with a small piece of beautifully-worked lace directly before the eyes. This is attached to the back of the head by a glittering buckle, those of the wealthier women sparkling with gold and brilliants, the only vanity a Persian woman is permitted to indulge in at places of public resort. This seems like a severe restraint on the natural disposition of the sex; yet it is said that in no other country have women more general influence and power. But they have been brought up in the belief that religion requires the face of women to be concealed from public gaze, and the notion remains as strong as the motive for chastity.

Moving among the spectators can be seen old men with cups and jugs of water, doling out drinks as an act of devotion; this they have done for many years at the Tazieh, in order to remind the people that Hossein suffered in his last hours from the agonies of thirst. As at a Spanish bull-fight, so here are venders of refreshments, with lemonade, tea, and kalians, or water-pipes, smoked by women as well as men. Most of the men present are in the loggias, and when the pit is full and others try to wedge their way in, the ushers and guards drive them out with merciless violence. Refreshments are served repeatedly; but after the performance begins both smoking and refreshments are banned, not only for purposes of good order and hearing, but as indicating a frivolity inconsistent with the tragical events of the drama.

Some zealot may give vent to a profound "Ya Ali! Ya Hossein!" then many voices join in; and thus by gradual accessions of fervor expectation is intensified and piety increased to a degree proper to a thorough appreciation of what is to come. The holy zeal of the faithful is further stimulated by the mullahs, both old and young, who ascend the pulpit in turn and exhort the people with a religious rhapsody, on the virtues and martyrdom of Ali and the holy Imams. Whenever some especially eloquent period is rolled forth in fervid tones, responses are heard from every quarter, now a loud "Ya Hossein!" or anon the sound of some one smiting his bare bosom.

#### Processions.

At length is seen, gathering in the entrance opposite the royal loggia, a crowd which forms itself into a procession of nearly two hundred men, who prove to be servants of the Shah's household. Led by the head-steward of the palace they enter the theatre, two by two, slowly marching around the circular stage. They are all dressed in black mourning livery; each has the breast bare, and with regular cadence, as they march, they smite their bosoms with the right hand. The skin is already crimson, for twice daily they repeat this extraordinary performance. Just as at the crucifixion of Christ the spectators smote their breasts, so this has, in all ages, been one of the most common of Oriental ceremonies for expressing lamentation.

This procession, like all which follow, delays a mo-



ment opposite the royal loggia and salutes the Shah. Directly after them comes a confused group of men in Arab costume, who beat their breasts in unison with a force that excites apprehension lest they should kill themselves, smiting over the heart with such continuous violence. Then follows a group nude above the middle, holding in each hand a large block of hard wood, which they strike together with a sharp, exasperating rhythm. The two latter groups, like the chorus in the Greek plays, are collectively symbolical of a class. Here they represent the wild Arabs of the desert, who from afar behold the march of Hossein through their country, and bewail their inability to assist the martyrs in their final struggle. As the last of the three processions files out of the building, the strains of martial music burst on the ear, solemnly breathing a funeral dirge. It is one of the military bands of the Shah, and is followed in steady procession by six other regimental bands, each in turn striking up a minor strain.

When the last band ceases its music and disappears, another group begins to collect. In front, facing the audience, are several children dressed in green; at their side warriors gather, glittering in the chain-armor and gold-inlaid helmets of past ages. Suddenly on the solemn silence, like the trill of a bird at night, comes the voice of one of the children, low and solemn, then rising to a high, clear tone, indescribably wild and thrillingly pathetic. This song of lamentation announces to the spectators that they are to prepare themselves to behold a soul-moving tragedy—the martyrdom of Hossein and the grandchildren of the prophet. Other voices gradu-

ally join in the chant, one by one, until a sublime choral elegy peals over the vast arena with such an agony of sound that it actually seems as if the actors were uttering their own death-song. Still chanting, the troop gradually enter the arena, and with slow and measured tread march around the stage and ascend the platform. There they form in double ranks, and with low obeisance pay their salutations to the Shah.

There is no scenery on the stage; the only objects it contains are such as might cause amusement among those who reflect on what was really the condition of affairs in the far-away little camp by the banks of the tawny Euphrates, where in the seventh century the group of martyrs surrounded by savage hordes, suffered with thirst and perished miserably on the hot wastes of Mesopotamia. One can scarcely repress a smile at the chairs overlaid with beaten gold, which are brought from the royal treasury, and the sofa and the beds covered with canopies to represent the tents. But these magnificent chairs really indicate the reverence which Persia to-day extends across the ages to the champions of the faith. It is not things but men that rivet the rapt attention of the vast audience; not material objects, but the achievements and utterances of souls seen and heard from lofty heights of moral grandeur.

#### Actors.

The martyr Hossein was represented by an actor named Mullah Hossein, draped in massive robes of green and cashmere, inwrought with gold; his head

covered with a large turban. During most of the performance he sat with head bent, reflecting on his approaching and inevitable doom. His half-brother Abbas, the son of Ali but not of Fatimah, was personated by Mirza Gholam Hossein, who wore a Saracenic coat-of-mail of wire links, terminating in a white tunic. His head was protected by a grand helmet of the olden time, graced with plumes. He was of a handsome cast and finely shaped, presenting altogether an heroic appearance attired in similar fashion. The heroine of the drama was Zeineb, the sister of Hossein, whose part was played by an actor named Mullah Hossein Zeineb Khan. He spoke in falsetto, as did all the female characters who were represented by men or boys. Zeineb, at the opening of the scene, appears shrouded in a thick mantle and seated on the earth bemoaning her fate. Most of the children of the various families gathered in the camp are also grouped on the sand, representing a feature of the tragedy analogous to the chorus of the Greek plays.

The entire performance is directed by a prompter, who walks unconcernedly on the stage, giving hints to the players or placing the younger actors in position. At the proper moment also, by a motion of the hand, he gives orders for the music to strike up or stop. But the spectator, even if a foreigner, soon ceases to notice him at all, or, indeed, to be aware of his presence; so interested does he become in the extraordinary character of all that is going on before him that he even forgets there is no scenery, and seems to be gazing upon actual events as they occurred on the banks of the Euphrates centuries ago, when the renowned caliph

was battling with his enemies, and the fate of his dynasty hung upon the fortunes of war.

### Orchestra.

The orchestra consists of a band of performers stationed at the top of the building. Their instruments are kettle-drums and long, straight horns, harsh and doleful, and startling enough to wake the dead. A signal at the beginning of each scene of the Tazieh awakes the confused war-din of the kettle-drums, and instantly afterward follows a terrific blast from the horns. At the close of a scene the same fierce music stimulates the glowing enthusiasm of the faithful, and nerves their zeal for events yet more tragic and sublime.

### A Stirring Scene.

One of the most memorable scenes is that in which Zeineb and Hossein bemoan their inevitable fate, and encourage each other to mutual endurance and fortitude. As the scene closes, Zeineb sinks into the dust, and throwing ashes on her head lapses into silence. Superb in the representation of woe and affliction is the scene which follows, when the young Ali Acbar, son of the dead Hasan, heroically resolves to fight his way to the river and bring water for the sufferers in the camp. Clad in armor, the youthful hero submits himself as a sacrifice, for he hardly can expect to return. When he chants, as it were, his own requiem, the words ring forth like a trumpet-note to the farthest nook of

the vast building, and the response comes in united wailings from the thousands gathered there. Beginning in a low murmur, like the sigh of a coming gale, the strange sound rises and falls like the weird music of the wind in an Atlantic storm. For several moments sobs and sighs, and now and again a half-suppressed shriek, sweep from one side of the building to the other. Strong men weep; there is hardly a dry eye in the audience, and even foreigners are deeply moved by this impressive scene.

The critical observer must admit that the conditions are exactly such as are likely to produce genuine emotion. The scenes portrayed represent incidents of the most tragic character, which have actually occurred, and which in the course of ages have become part of the life and thought of the people who are now so vividly reminded of them. A belief in the suffering of the Saviour is not more indelibly impressed on the heart of the true Christian than the belief which the true Shiah maintains in the sufferings of the sons of Ali.

#### Ali Acbar.

A milk-white Arabian steed from the royal stables, superbly caparisoned, is now led into the arena, and after receiving the moving farewell of Hossein and Zeineb and the God-speed of the chorus, Ali Acbar mounts and starts forth on his perilous errand. Instantly, from several quarters, appear troops of the enemy on horseback and on foot, armed Arabs of the desert, who crowd after him in fierce pursuit. It is

wildly exciting to see this mad race around the arena, where thousands of women are crowded down to the very edge of the narrow lane which is thronged with steeds and warriors. But no one flinches; the horses are well trained, and no accident results. Finally, Ali Acbar turns into one of the avenues of exit and disappears, surrounded by the pursuing host. Presently he falls covered with wounds.

In the next scene, after a savage peal from the war-horns, Shemr, the leader of the beleaguering army, appears, clad in complete armor, and summons the camp to surrender. Then he proceeds to hold a long colloquy with Abbas, the half-brother of Hossein, ordering him to yield before his outnumbered troops should be annihilated by an overwhelming host. Hossein remains silent at one side, while Abbas unconditionally rejects terms which imply the abandonment of the claims of the house of Ali and Fatimah to the caliphate, and proudly flings defiance at the foe.

In closing, Abbas, as if endowed with prophetic vision, delivers a noble apostrophe to the future splendor of Persia, the asylum for the devoted followers of Ali, and his eloquent bursts of poetic fire call forth deep murmurs of applause. Waving his mailed hand with lofty scorn, Shemr, with equal dramatic effect, lays on Hossein the responsibility for the disasters to come, and, remounting his steed, departs.

Now night comes on; by tacit consent the decisive conflict is deferred until the following day. Overpowered with anxiety and suspense, Hossein and his family fall into heavy slumber. But Ali and Fatimah,

the deceased parents of those who are doomed to die for the rights of the prophet's house, can not rest tranquil in their graves. If they are powerless to avert the doom of their children, they can at least bewail their fate together. The two figures, shrouded in the ceremonies of the tomb, are seen and heard conversing in sepulchral accents on the stage. In spite of the difficulty of presenting such a scene, the effect is solemn and impressive. As Ali and Fatimah pass out of sight, Shemr and one of his generals appear from the hostile army to reconnoitre the camp and make plans for bringing the final assault on the morrow to a successful issue.

#### **Death of Abbas.**

The fatal battle is then presented. The resisting force is typified in the person of Abbas, who, after a terrifying din of kettle-drums and horns, bids farewell to the little group on the stage, being first invested with a white mantle thrown over his shoulders by Hossein. Immediately on mounting his charger, Abbas encounters a numerous troop of Arabs, who fiercely drive him around the stage until he disappears for a moment in the lobbies, followed by the enemy. On reappearing he presents the appearance of having been in a severe conflict; one of his arms seems to be hewn off, and his raiment is reeking with blood. Again the enemy pursue him; when he once more appears on the scene both arms are gone, and with drooping form he barely sustains himself on the saddle of his well-trained steed, which also moves with limp and feeble step. When

Abbas reaches the camp, he is lifted by wailing friends from the saddle, and helpless and dying falls on the sand. As the enemy swarm on the scene and Shemr raises his glittering scimitar to hew off the head of the prostrate warrior, an extraordinary wail of anguish bursts with one accord from the vast audience.

But the Shah arises to depart, and the scene is closed. The wounded man springs to his feet; the uplifted sword is sheathed, and with a great tumult the audience surges toward the avenues of exit. Many of the women, however, will not leave until forced to move by the ushers, so anxious are they to retain their places for the performance of the evening. To the women of Teheran the *Tazieh* is the one great event of the year. They go early in the morning of each day, and patiently wait for many a long hour for the entertainment to begin.

#### A Night Performance.

On each of the ten days during which the *Tazieh* is represented at the royal theatre there are two performances, one in the afternoon and one in the evening. At the latter the audience is usually larger, and the immense interior is brilliant with the light of several thousand candles gleaming through colored globes.

The episodes of the drama were not less interesting and well rendered. The performance was intended to represent the heroism of Muchtar, the avenger, and his final triumph over Obeid-Ullah, the immediate instigator of the slaughter of Hossein. Muchtar was one of the most fanatical adherents to the cause of Ali and



a firm believer in the rights of his adherents. He vowed to exterminate all who had been concerned in the death of Hossein, slaying all the leaders in that great tragedy, besides a vast number slain in battle, and a still greater multitude in cold blood.

### Obeid-Ullah.

The first scene presented Obeid-Ullah seated in ordly fashion on his divan, insolently exulting that at last the difficult task assigned him by his master, Yezced, was accomplished. The tidings had been brought him by a swift messenger that Hossein had perished, and the house of Moaviyeh was now firmly established on the throne, its foundations cemented by the blood of the descendants of Mohammed. Soon a monotonous beat of bells was heard, and camels appeared, bearing Zeineb and the children who had been spared from the slaughter, preceded by slaves carrying the heads of Hossein, Abbas and the other heroes who had sacrificed their lives. Obeid-Ullah smote the head of Hossein, and received the captives with haughty disdain. But Zeineb replied with the reckless eloquence of despair, defying him to complete his deeds of blood by murdering the remaining descendants of Ali who were now in his power.

With singular magnanimity the ferocious satrap forbore to take the frantic heroine at her word, but ordered his guards to execute Moslemeh, a man of Cufa, whose eyes had been put out for adhering to the cause of Ali. Moslemeh, led by his little child, appeared before

Obeid-Ullah, once more to curse him for his cruelties and crimes. The child shielded his father as best he could from the executioners who sought to hew him down, but at last a fatal thrust, intended for the father, felled the faithful boy to the earth. Moslemeh, now without a guide, sought the child, calling for him in moving accents, until, in his wild groping, he stumbled on the lifeless form. He stooped down, and with intense anxiety felt the corpse from head to foot; and when the terrible truth fairly burst on him, he gave an agonizing cry and fell across the bosom of his child.

#### *Muchtar, the Avenger.*

But now came the hour for retribution. Muchtar, the avenger, appears on the scene, entering the stage with majestic strides and stentorian tones. His armed retainers drag Obeid-Ullah from the seat of power, and with contumely and abuse, hurry him to execution, together with his chief adherents. In this part of the play it is reported that two men were actually hanged by ropes suspended from the dome above, another was beheaded, while a cauldron was prepared for the boiling of a third. But at this moment it was found that the Shah had left for his palace, and the performance came to an abrupt termination, just in time to save a poor man from a terrible fate. It was noticeable, however, that the men who had been executed proved to be very lively corpses at the close of the entertainment, retiring from the stage with very limber steps, considering their narrow escape.

By the seventh or eighth day of the *Tazieh*, as the entertainment is drawing to a close, the popular anxiety to see it increases with each performance, and long before the opening of the play the doors are closed, the building being packed to its utmost capacity. Outside a crowd is surging back and forth, anxiously waiting for a chance to gain admittance within the huge iron-bound portals. To none but men of high rank would these doors now be opened, and then only after beating the gates for several minutes and shouting to the porters within to swing a door open for them to pass. But this is no easy operation, for the tumultuous masses have now become so obstreperous that the porters are obliged to slam to the gate instantly, and thus there is imminent danger of being squeezed to death, an accident which has repeatedly happened on the last days of the *Tazieh*. Sometimes an elephant is used to push the crowd backward, and by slipping past his mighty bulk, as the door opens for his egress, a few venturesome spirits may force their way into the building.

Each performance opens with the processions already described. The regular recurrence of the funeral music and bands of mourners with each act of the drama, while somewhat monotonous, serves to keep before the mind of the spectators that this drama is not a mere spectacle to entertain, but a great commemorative representation, intended to keep alive the events on which the religion is founded, that has given vitality to the national life of Persia for a thousand years. The concluding performances are designed with consummate art, and are admirably adapted to the character

of the audience. While some of the details might seem to us grotesquely absurd, yet the general arrangement is well conceived with a view to divert the attention of the audience, to sustain the interest by appealing to a variety of emotions, and thus gradually leading up to the profound and overpowering emotion evoked by the closing scenes of the drama.

### King Solomon.

King Suleiman, or Solomon, still holds a wide repute throughout the East for his marvelous wisdom, his skill in dealing with the mysteries of nature, and the imperial dominion he exerted over the genii and demons of the unseen world. The belief in the magic power of Solomon, of which we have so many stories in the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments* and the legends of Europe in the dark ages, still obtains in Persia. And Solomon it was, in all his glory, who was now represented in the *Tazieh*. The poetic fancy of the Persian dramatist has no difficulty in bringing Solomon into the play. The great king was so versed in prevision, or second sight, that it is claimed he was master not only of the past, but also of the future. Thus it was no extraordinary exercise of power for his eye to pierce fifteen centuries into the future and desery the events that were to transpire on the sands of Arabia ages after he and his glory had departed from earth. Therefore comes the mighty Suleiman, radiating power from his throne. As evidence of his influence over the genii and all created things, he summons before him demons and





*Solomon received the queen of Sheba with a pomp  
suitable to the rank of the high contracting parties ;  
for the queen's visit to the king was with an eye to  
matrimony.*

SCENE FROM A PERSIAN DRAMA.

*QUEEN OF SHEBA BEFORE SOLOMON*

*After an original painting by A. D. Rahn*



djinns, lions and tigers, crocodiles and all creeping things. From every side they invade the arena and make their obsequies to the great king. It must be admitted that many of them were not strictly shaped after correct models, and indicated only moderate acquaintance with natural history or the mechanics of imitation.

### *The Queen of Sheba.*

After giving this exhibition of his power, Solomon next prepared to receive the queen of Sheba, with a pomp suitable to the rank of the high contracting parties, for according to Oriental legend the queen's visit to the king was with an eye to matrimony. This scene gave a tolerably exact representation of the marriage ceremonies of an Eastern court. First came a train of camels, gay with elaborate housings; strings of bells jangled on the necks of these stately animals, and tufts of crimson and blue waved on their lofty heads as they marched majestically around the arena with velvet tread. The effects of the princess, inclosed in iron-bound chests, were carried by the camels and a train of richly caparisoned sumpter mules. A troop of horsemen, magnificently mounted, represented the military escort of the queen, who appeared in truly royal state, seated with her maidens in a houdah of crimson and gold, borne on the back of an elephant. This entire procession, including scores of animals, passed around the arena so close to the densely packed masses of women that the sides of the great beasts sometimes touched their garments; but no one was injured or even showed alarm. Very re-

markable was the intelligence of these animals, which seemed to enter fully into the spirit of the occasion, and while sometimes showing a little sportiveness, exhibited no inclination to viciousness.

The queen of Sheba having arrived in the presence of Solomon, with all the pomp befitting the grandeur of both, the king again makes an exhibition of his necromantic skill by placing before the audience a scene which represented the marriage of Khassim, the son of Hasan, an event which had occurred the day previous to the final attack on the camp. Hossein foresaw that he and the larger part of his band were about to be destroyed, and there was danger that the house of Ali might become extinct unless measures were taken to prevent it. Presuming that the younger members of his company would be spared when the general slaughter occurred, Hossein was anxious to insure the preservation of the family while he was yet alive. It was therefore agreed that the two branches should be united in marriage without delay; and it was arranged that Khassim, the youthful son of the murdered Hasan, and Rudabeh, the daughter of Hossein, should be married that very day. The event was one of remarkable interest, owing to the extraordinary circumstances which attended it, and also of great importance in the history of Islamism, and especially of the sect of the Shiahhs. It gave to the Shiahhs nine holy Imams, the great dynasty of the Sefaveans, which carried Persia to an exalted pinnacle of power and splendor, and also a great multitude of Seyeds, or descendants of the prophet, whose green turbans are now seen throughout the Orient.

The preliminary colloquy of Zeineb, the sister of Hossein, of Leila, the mother of Khassim, and of the young bridegroom himself, was of the most affecting and impassioned character. The knowledge of what the morrow would bring gave peculiar solemnity to what, under other circumstances, would have been an occasion of festivity and joy. The two women gave vent to vehement exclamations of sorrow, while the youthful bridegroom, in the most pathetic accents, bewailed the approaching doom of his house and the terrible scenes that would follow his marriage. His eloquence was extraordinary for one so young. In due time the bride appeared at his tent-door, carried in a covered litter on the back of a camel led by Arab warriors of the desert. When she entered on the scene her bridegroom clasped her, weeping, in his arms, while the women also wept over them with heart-rending cries; and Hossein, aroused from his stupor of despair, joined in profound but majestic lamentations. A great wave of emotion now swept over the audience, and for several moments came from thousands of spectators an awful sound of mingled rage and mourning. Selecting this crisis as a suitable time for closing the performance of the day, the Shah arose to depart, and immediately the audience dispersed.

### Final Scenes of the Tazieh

To the final scenes of the *Tazieh* Christians are not invited; for the events then presented are of too solemn a nature for the profane eyes of unbelievers. On the

last day especially it is not considered safe for foreigners to be seen in the building by the people, for then the murder of Hossein is consummated with a vividness which arouses the audience to the last pitch of agitation, and it is impossible to foretell what might then occur if some excited devotee should take umbrage at the sight of an infidel. While there is now an evident tendency to moderate the excess of the *Tazieh*, actors, carried away by the excitement of the closing scenes, have been known to sacrifice their lives. An incident previous to the final act, and one of annual occurrence is the demand for the release of a prominent criminal—the request being made to the Shah himself by townsmen of the prisoner. The crowd of armed fanatics is so clamorous and peremptory that the Shah finds it expedient to yield, and sends an order for the release of the prisoner. During the last few days of the Moharrem it is also common for the rabble to go to the prisons and insist on the release of criminals, whom they demand by name. In order to prevent the storming of the prison, and save his own life, the jailer is forced to yield, and on one occasion sixty-five men were thus set at liberty. So well established is this custom that the authorities dare not, as yet, interfere to prevent it, although the progressive spirit now apparent will undoubtedly check it before many years. Fortunately for the credit of the government and the well-being of society, means are taken to track and recapture these men immediately after the excitement has subsided.

Apart from the excesses which have sprung out of

the Moharrem celebration, there is much to admire in the *Tazieh*. As a manifestation of the sentiments of a great religious sect, it merits respectful attention, and is also most interesting as an exhibition of the dramatic genius of the Persian race. It seems reasonable to infer that a decided talent for the drama exists in Persia, which only requires toleration and encouragement from the laws and customs of the country to reach a high degree of excellence.

### Persian Comedy.

It is a well-established fact in the history of literature that poetry in every nation precedes prose; so likewise in the particular department of the drama, tragedy precedes comedy. In Persia tragedy, as seen in the Passion-play, is hardly a century old, though the annual memorial services out of which it has grown can be traced back to the twelfth century. While the religious leaders have fostered this new development of the national genius, they have resolutely suppressed attempts at general depiction of life and manner. Yet, as is abundantly attested by the popular lyrics of Hafiz and the astronomer-poet, Omar Khayyam, a free-thinking spirit is widely spread among the cultured classes. In recent years closer contact with foreigners has led to the importation of translations of comedies from the Turkish in which various striking features of Mohammedan life have been presented, and these translations have naturally been followed by adaptations which attract large audiences in the cities, though the respect-

able classes hold aloof. While even yet the great religious dramas are not printed and published as literature, but are held in reserve by the stage-directors and theatrical authorities, the new comedies, being shorter, have occasionally been printed and thus form a regular part of modern Persian literature. They are eagerly sought by foreigners who for any reason wish to obtain direct acquaintance with the vernacular of to-day. It is not improbable that ere long some genius, disregarding the conventions which would hamper his action, will, by giving life-like pictures of the humorous aspects of Persian society, raise comedy to a recognized position in the national literature.

#### **Dramatic Festivals in Tibet.**

Tibet, the elevated plateau north of the Himalaya mountains, is probably of all lands the least known to Western civilized nations. The mysterious gloom which for centuries has hung over this region is owing, first, to the difficulty of access, as it can be reached only by scaling formidable mountain ranges; secondly, to its Arctic climate, due to its elevation of 10,000 to 15,000 feet above the sea-level, and, lastly, to the rigorous exclusion of foreigners by the Buddhist lamas who exercise absolute authority over the people. Tibet is indeed the stronghold of Buddhism, which, however, has there, in the course of centuries, taken a form widely different from that of its original, now banished from India, the place of its birth. The few European travelers who have penetrated this obscure country have uni-

formly reported a striking external resemblance between Buddhist ceremonies and practices as there observed and those of Roman Catholic countries. No sufficient explanation of this remarkable fact has ever been given. Too little is known of the past history of the Tibetan people and their religion to afford a sure foundation for any theory.

It is impossible to decide whether the observance of the spring and autumn festivals which are every year conducted at the principal monasteries in this strange land were introduced by the Buddhists, or whether they are inherited from the Shamans, or priest-magicians of the Tartars, to which race the people evidently belong. It is more probable, however, that they were of popular origin, and have been accepted and modified by the Buddhist priests and monks, who now conduct these exhibitions of a more or less dramatic nature.

The singular theatre of which we give a view was erected at Himis, a cloister on the plateau, 12,000 feet above the sea. It is two days' journey from Leh, the chief city of Ladak, and nine days' journey from Srinaygar, in Cashmere in northern India. Himis is close to the caravan route from India to China. Its cloister is inferior to that of the Grand Lama at Lhassa, the capital of Tibet. Yet it is an important seminary of Buddhist priests, who are here trained in strict seclusion for their vocation as upholders of that mystical religion.

Twice in the year the routine of their studies and devotions is interrupted by the great festivals. Then the people of the surrounding districts for more than a

hundred miles assemble to witness the customary plays. The inmates of the cloister come forth, arrayed in fantastic robes of glaring colors, many of them disguised with heads of bulls and other animals, and some with hideous devil-masks. They bear in their hands staves with little skulls, two-edged swords and strangely-formed musical instruments. The whole procession is as grotesque as only the Orient under the influence of the grossest superstition and religious fanaticism can make it.

Weird dances and dramatic representations follow, which may perhaps signify the contest between the giant forces of Nature at the critical seasons of the year—spring and autumn. The background of this strange play is well suited to the performance. The long corridors of the cloister with the grotesque and costly carvings of Buddhist artists, the heavy gilding of the ornaments, the curving roofs, the statues of Buddha, half enveloped in the incense smoke of the chapels, and beyond these the grand views of the surrounding mountains. The festival lasts for two days, from early morning till late at night. The great gongs with copper clappers are set ringing with their strangely muffled vibrations. Silver trumpets, eight feet long, supply a shrill accompaniment. The terrible din has a nerve-rending effect on European ears. Sharp gusts of wind drive the snow over the mountain passes, and the pilgrims, shivering with cold, muffle themselves in their furs and wraps. Many women and girls are noticeable by their costly robes and head-dresses, set with gold and precious stones. At the end of the play the pil-



grims depart; the monks return to their devotions, and after the autumn exhibition the region under its deep covering of snow takes more and more the semblance of death.

### Other Oriental Nations.

Except in China and Japan, India and Persia, there are no traces of a native drama among the civilized nations of Asia, such forms as exist here and there being borrowed from other nations, as in Siam, where plays have been freely adapted from the dramatic literature of the Hindoos. Though the Bible contains strong dramatic elements, the drama was entirely unknown to the Hebrews throughout their existence as a nation, albeit they are among the best patrons of the theatre in countries where they have made their home. Other nations, and especially the Assyrians, although they knew not the drama, have produced epic and lyric poetry which is intensely dramatic in character.

To the Egyptians the drama was also unknown, though their civilization and religious ideas exercised a most potent influence on the creeds and culture of the Greeks. While it cannot be definitely ascertained how much the Greeks were indebted to the Egyptians in various branches of knowledge, it is certain that the former confessed themselves the disciples of the latter in the cardinal principles of their natural theology. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul found in Egypt its most solemn expression in mysterious recitations connected with the rites of sepulture, and treating of

the migration of the soul from its earthly to its eternal abode. The ideas to which they sought to give utterance centred in the worship of Osiris, as the vivifying power, or universal soul of nature. The same deity was also honored by processions among the rural districts of Egypt, and, according to Herodotus, these closely resembled, except for the absence of choruses, the Hellenic processions in honor of the wine-god Dionysus.

The Egyptians regarded music as one of the most important of the sciences. Though it was not, as among the Greeks, a part of their system of education, it was diligently studied by their priests, and in the sacred rites of their gods the flute and harp were freely used, in addition to vocal music. Dancing was almost restricted to professional performers; but while the higher orders abstained from it, the lower classes indulged in it on festive occasions. At such times pantomime was a favorite amusement, frequently accompanied with license and gross buffoonery, as at the early rustic festivals of the Greeks and Italians.

### **The Book of Job.**

Reference has before been made to the *Book of Job*, which some critics have declared to be in the nature of a drama, though by most writers it has been pronounced a parable, with perhaps a foundation of fact. We may notice a few of its more prominent features, and first of all see how they correspond with the rules laid down by ancient critics. Aristotle declares that in tragedy the action should be grand, pathetic

and entire, meaning by the word grand that it should relate to exalted personages. This first condition is certainly fulfilled in the *Book of Job*; for it deals with angels, with Satan, and with God himself. It is also eminently pathetic, for we see "a just and upright man," for no fault of his own, deprived of his possessions and children, and sitting in a state of perfect desolation; so that a more affecting picture was never drawn. It is entire, according to the strictest sense; for it commences with the misfortunes of Job, is occupied by and terminates with them, the first twelve verses of the first chapter answering to the prologue of the Greek tragedies.

The style is intensely dramatic, differing in this respect from other canonical writings. It is, throughout, firm, equable, and polished; often sublime, and never low. Violent hyperboles are not to be admitted in tragedy, and here the just medium is preserved, and in so many long speeches it never, for a single sentence, fails. It is well adapted to the actors, who, being Asiatics, use more swelling phrases than Europeans; for what is tumid to us would be flat with them. The metaphors and similes are peculiarly fit for an Arabian to use, and at the same time intelligible to all nations. The descriptions of the leviathan and behemoth are terrifically grand. Several other descriptions are essentially dramatic and poetical.

The dominating passion of grief affords as good a substratum for a tragedy as terror or horror, and is undoubtedly better for a moral purpose, other passions being introduced, but so carefully as not to draw our

attention for a moment from the principal motive. The characters are finely drawn, Job being the central figure, while Elihu and the three friends are slightly but correctly sketched. Satan is delineated according to Asiatic ideas, which made of him rather an officer than an enemy of the Almighty.

On the other side the connection of speeches by narrative in the *Book of Job* seems to entitle it to be classed with epic rather than dramatic poetry. Yet the learned John Owen, in his remarkable book, *The Five Great Sceptical Dramas of History*, places the *Book of Job* at the head of the list, the other four being the *Prometheus* of Æschylus, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Calderon's *Wonder-working Magician* and Goethe's *Faust*.

In calling these works "sceptical dramas" the author means that in them the divine government of human affairs, in its distribution of good and evil among the righteous and the wicked, is severely challenged, whatever may be the answer suggested in each case, whether the dramatist finally aims to justify the ways of God to man or not, or whether he has in any manner solved or attempted to solve the problems he has presented.

#### Arabian Literature.

Another great literature remains to be considered—the literature of Arabia, whose language has been widely diffused by the triumphs of the religion of Mohammed. It may first be remarked that, while the Arabians have neither epic nor dramatic poetry, in our own sense of the word, they have that which is nearly

related to the epic, and which, among themselves, takes the place of the drama. They have been inexhaustible in love-poems, in elegies on the death of their heroes, or of their beauties, in moral verses, among which their fables may be reckoned, in eulogistic, satirical, descriptive, and above all, didactic poems. But, among all their works, there is not a single epic, comedy or tragedy.

In their different branches of poetry the Arabians display a surprising subtlety and great refinement of thought. Their style of expression is graceful and elegant, their sentiments are noble, and, if we may credit Oriental scholars, there prevails, in the original language, a harmony in the verses, a propriety in the expression, and a grace throughout, which are necessarily lost in a translation. But it cannot escape us that the fame of these lyric compositions rests, in some degree, on their bold metaphors, their extravagant allegories, and their excessive hyperboles. It may justly be asserted that the strongest characteristic of Oriental taste is an abuse of the imagination and of the intellect. The Arabs despised the poetry of the Greeks, which to them appeared timid, cold, and constrained; and, among all the books which, with almost a superstitious veneration, they borrowed from that people, there is hardly a single poem. None of those relics of classical genius were adjudged worthy of a translation, and neither Homer nor Sophocles, nor Pindar, was allowed to enter into a comparison with their own poets. The aim of the Arabian poets was always to make brilliant use of the boldest and most gigantic images. They sought

to astonish, neglected natural sentiment, and made an exhibition of art; and the more the ornaments of art were multiplied, the more admirable in their eyes did their work appear. On this account they were perpetually seeking for difficulties to vanquish, though these added neither to the development of the idea nor to the harmony of the verse.

To those nations which attained a classical poetry, the imitation of nature had discovered the use of the epic and the drama, in which the poet endeavors to express the true language of the human heart. The people of Arabia never made this attempt. Their poetry is entirely lyric. It ought, indeed, to bear a character of inspiration, to justify it in rising so far above the common language of nature. Under whatever name it be known, and to whatever rules it has been subjected, it will always be found to be the language of the passions.

But, if the Arabians possess neither the epic nor the drama, they have been, on the other hand, the inventors of a style of verse and poetic prose which is related to the epic, and which far surpasses in interest the average drama, serving, moreover, as the basis for many a romantic play. We owe to them those wondrous tales of which the conception is so brilliant, and the imagination so rich and so varied; tales which have been the delight of our infancy, and which at a more advanced age we never read without feeling their enchantments anew. Everyone is acquainted with the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*; but the common translation comprises only a small part of the great Arabian collection. This prodigious collection is not confined merely to books, but

forms the treasure of a numerous class of men and women, who, throughout the whole extent of the Mohammedan dominion, in Turkey, Persia, and even to the extremity of India, find a livelihood in reciting these stories to crowds that delight to forget, in the pleasing dreams of imagination, the cares and troubles of the present moment. In the coffee-houses of the Levant, one of these men will gather around him a silent crowd, which listens to his tale more eagerly than we hang upon the words of a favorite actor. Sometimes he will excite terror or pity, but more frequently he pictures to his audience those brilliant and fantastic visions which are the patrimony of Eastern imaginations. At times he will provoke laughter, and it is only on such occasions that the brows of the fierce Mussulman will unbend. This is the exhibition which, throughout the Levant, supplies the place of our dramatic representations. The public squares abound with these story-tellers, and they are often summoned to the seraglio. Even the physician frequently recommends them to his patients, in order to soothe pain, to calm agitation, or to produce sleep after long watchfulness; and accustomed to sickness, they modulate their voices, soften their tones, and gently suspend them as sleep steals over the sufferer.

To the Arabs their poets and story-tellers are what the rhapsodists were to the ancient Greeks; not that they copied or imitated the Greeks, whose poetry, as we have seen, with its chaste, classic style, seemed to them frigid and artificial. Every year their leading poets met at the feast of Okad, not only to recite their

compositions, but to receive the reward, which consisted not merely of applause but of more substantial recognition. In early days much of their verse consisted of eulogies of chieftains, rulers and distinguished men, and for a single ode, or "kassedah" as it was called, a hundred camels or several thousand gold pieces were no uncommon donation. Each poet, or at least each one of the higher class, had his personal patron, through whose generosity was furnished the remuneration that is now expected from the press, while publicity was given to a few chosen works of genius by the custom of suspending in some place of public resort such pieces as, at the annual gatherings of Okad had won the palm allotted for the highest excellence. Seven of these, known in Arabian literature by the title of *Múallakat*, or "Suspended," as being emphatically the best of their kind, and all belonging to the sixth century, became for succeeding ages the accepted and classical standards for Arab poetical composition.

Of prose, up to the time of Mahomet's succession, there was absolutely none, and even the most eloquent of speeches were never embodied in writing. The irregular half-rhyming sentences of the Koran were the first attempt at prose, which afterward came into general use, and was presently applied to history, biography, romance, philosophical treatises and subjects of every description.

The imagination of the Arabs, which in their stories shines in all its brilliancy, is easily distinguished from that of the chivalric nations, though it is easy to perceive a certain resemblance between them. The supernatural



world is the same in both, but the moral world is different. The Arabian tales, like the romances of chivalry, convey us into fairy realms, but the human personages whom they introduce are very dissimilar. These tales had their birth after the Arabians, yielding the empire of the sword to the Tartars, the Turks, and the Persians, had devoted themselves to commerce and the arts. We recognize in them the style of a mercantile people, as we do that of a warlike nation in the romances of chivalry. Riches and artificial luxuries dispute the palm with the splendid gifts of the fairies. The heroes unceasingly traverse distant realms, and the interests of merchandise excite their active curiosity as much as the love of renown awakened the spirit of the ancient knights. Besides the female characters we find only four distinct classes of person—princes, merchants, monks or calenders, and slaves. Soldiers are seldom introduced. Valor and military achievements inspire terror and produce the most desolating effects, but excite no enthusiasm. There is, on this account, in the Arabian tales, something less noble and heroic than we usually expect in compositions of this nature. But, on the other hand, we must consider that these story-tellers are our superiors in the art of producing, sustaining and unceasingly varying the interest of this kind of fiction; that they are the creators of that brilliant mythology of fairies and genii which extends the bounds of the world, multiplies the riches and the strength of human nature, and which, without striking us with terror, carries us into the realms of marvels and prodigies. It is from them that we have derived that intoxication of

love, that tenderness and delicacy of sentiment, and that reverential awe of women, which have operated so powerfully on our chivalrous feelings. We trace their effects in all the literature of Southern Europe, which owes to this cause much of its mental character. Many of these tales had found their way into our poetry long before the translation of the *Arabian Nights*. Some of them are to be met with in the old French fabliaux, in Boccaccio and in Ariosto, and the same stories which have charmed our infancy, passing from tongue to tongue, and from nation to nation, through channels frequently unknown, are now familiar to the memory, and delight the imagination of the civilized world.

## THE DEATH-STONE.

*(Translated from the Japanese under the auspices of Mr.  
W. G. Aston, of H. B. M.'s Legation, Yedo.)*

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

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*THE SPIRIT OF THE "FLAWLESS JEWEL  
MAIDEN."*

*THE BUDDHIST PRIEST GEN-O.*

*THE CHORUS.*

### Prelude.

The *Death-stone* belongs to the older school of the Japanese classic drama. The Buddhist priest Gen-o, in his religious pilgrimage, has come to a rock whose shade seems to invite him to repose. But a spirit in the guise of a young woman warns him not to risk the danger of death. He inquires the reason, and she tells him that this is the famous Death-stone of the moor of Nasu. Then she relates the story of the "Flawless Jewel Maiden" and later acknowledges that she is the spirit of that maiden, now doomed to abide in that place. The chief attraction to the aristocratic Japanese in this play is its refined language and the soothing cadences of the chant of the chorus, which echoes and emphasizes the story of the genius of the place.

*Priest.*—What though the vapors of the fleeting scene  
Obscure the view of pilgrims here below;  
With heart intent on heav'nly things unseen,  
I take my journey through this world of woe.

I am a priest, and Gen-o is my name. With a heart ever fixed on the path of wisdom, I had long groaned over the imperfection of my spiritual insight. But now I see clear, and, with the sacerdotal besom, I shall sweep the cobwebs from the eyes of men. After sojourning in the province of Michinoku, I would now fain turn my steps towards the capital, and there

pass the winter season of meditation. I have crossed the river Shirakawa, and have arrived at the moor of Nasu, in the Province of Shimotsuké.

Alas! the vapors of the fleeting scene  
Obscure the view of pilgrims here below;  
Strike out the hope in heav'nly things unseen,  
What guide were left us through this world of woe?

*Spirit.*—Rest not under the shadow of this stone!

*Priest.*—Wherefore not? Is there any reason for not resting under the shadow of this stone?

*Spirit.*—Yes; this is the Death-stone of the moor of Nasu; and not men only, but birds even and beasts perish if they approach it.

Needs there my warning? Hast thou not heard tell  
Of Nasu's Death-stone, and its fatal spell?  
I entreat thee, depart!

*Priest.*—What is it that maketh this stone so eager to take life?

*Spirit.*—It is that into it, in the olden time, entered the spirit of her who was called the "Flawless Jewel Maiden," concubine to the Emperor Toba-no-in.

*Priest.*—Into this stone? on this far-distant road?

Methought Kiyoto was in the girl's abode.

*Spirit.*—Verily, it is because there is a reason for this that the story hath been handed down from the olden time.

*Priest.*—Thy words and thine appearance seem to tell me that thou knowest this story.

*Spirit.*—No! no! I know it but in outline. Fleeting as the dew is the memory of the maiden's fate.

Erst through the King's abode,  
Proudly the maiden strode,  
But on this desolate road,  
Now doom'd to dwell,  
Crime upon crime she heaps,  
Vainly the pilgrim weeps,  
Cursing with dying lips,  
The fatal spell!

*Chorus.*—The Death-stone stands on Nasu's *moor*  
 Through winter snows and summer heat;  
 The moss grows grey upon its sides,  
 But the foul demon haunts it yet.  
 Chill blows the blast: the owl's sad choir  
 Hoots hoarsely through the moaning pines;  
 Among the low chrysanthemums  
 The skulking fox, the jackal whines.  
 Fair was the girl,—beyond expression fair;  
 But what her country, who her parents were  
 None knew. It seems as if the misty space  
 Beyond the clouds must be the native place  
 Of one who, soon as shown to mortal sight,  
 Ascended straightway to the cloudy height.  
 For not in vain were beauty's charms display'd  
 Before th' Imperial eyes: so fair a maid  
 Was surely born to share a monarch's bed.

*Spirit.*—Once did the Emperor's Majesty see fit  
 To put to proof the lovely damsel's wit.

*Cho.*—Nor did she fail in aught: the sacred text  
 Which guides our steps through this world to the next,  
 The Chinese classics, too, Confucian lore,  
 Japan's sweet poets of the days of yore,—  
 She knew them all, nor was it all she knew,  
 For she herself was bard and seer too.

*Spirit.*—A mind so flawless in a form so fair  
 Deserved the name her lord then gave to her.

*Cho.*—Once the Mikado made a splendid feast  
 At the cool summer-palace: every guest  
 That of accomplishments or wit could boast  
 Was bidden there—a gay and brilliant host,  
 Like to the clouds, from out whose fleecy sphere  
 Th' Imperial kindred, like the moon, shone clear.  
 But hark! what rumor mingles with the strains  
 Of sweetest music? see! the heav'nly plains  
 Are wrapp'd in inky darkness. Not a star—  
 The moon not risen yet: but from afar,  
 Heralded by the rustling of the shower,  
 The storm comes howling through the festive bower.

The lanterns are blown out: "A light! a light!"  
 Cry all at once; but from the pitchy night  
 No answer comes to soothe their anxious fright.  
 But lo! from out the "Jewel Maiden's" frame  
 There's seen to dart a weirdly lustrous flame!  
 It grows, it spreads, it fills th' Imperial halls:  
 The painted screens, the gilt and damask'd walls,  
 The very trees, erst plung'd in blackest night,  
 Sparkle and glitter in the lurid light.

*Spirit*.—That hour the fiend's foul witchcraft was revealed.

*Cho*.—That hour the fiend's foul witchcraft was revealed.

The subtle venom noiselessly instilled  
 Into her lordly lover's pearly frame  
 Prey'd on his vitals like a burning flame.  
 Then spake the Court Magician: "Without doubt  
 That harlot is the culprit: cast her out!  
 Drive her away! Seest not the impish plan  
 Laid to destroy thy crown and Great Japan?"  
 Resentment dire then fills th' Imperial breast:  
 He now hates most what once he loved the best.  
 Driven with curses from the monarch's door,  
 The witch now haunts this drear and distant moor.

*Priest*.—Thou hast deigned to tell me this long history—  
 who art thou?

*Spirit*.—Wherefore any longer conceal it? The demon that  
 of old dwelt in the breast of the "Flawless Jewel Maiden," and  
 that now inhabits the Death-stone of the moor of Nasu, is none  
 other than myself.

*Priest*.—Speakest thou truly? Well! well! it is the soul  
 sunk lowest in the depths of wickedness that rises highest on  
 the pinnacle of virtue.

I will bestow on thee the priestly robe and begging-bowl.  
 But thou must reveal thyself to mine eyes in thy proper shape.

*Spirit*.—Alas! what sorrow and confusion!

In the garish light of day  
 My body fades away,  
 Like Mount Asama's fires:  
 With the night I'll come again,



Confess my sins with pain  
And new-born pure desires.

*Cho.*—Dark will be the night:

But her red lustrous light  
Ne'er needs the moon.  
Wait! fear not! she cries,  
Watch on with trusting eyes:  
My hour'll come soon.

(The Spirit vanishes into the Stone.)

*Priest.*—'Tis said of stocks and stones: they have no soul.

Yet, what signifieth the text: "Herbs and trees, stones and rocks, shall all enter into Nirvana," save that from the beginning a divine essence dwelt within them? No! if I bestow on this demon the sacerdotal robe and bowl, who can doubt but that for it, too, Nirvana will throw open its gates? Therefore, with offerings of flowers and of fragrant incense, I recite the Scriptures with my face turned towards the stone, and I exorcise it thus:

Spirit of the Death-stone! I conjure thee: whence comest thou?

Why cumberest thou the earth?

Tarry not! reveal thyself! reveal thyself!

E'en for such as thee mine intercessions shall cause  
Nirvana to fling open its gates.

E'en such as thou shalt put on the majesty of a god.

Hear me! hear me!

(The Stone is rent asunder, and the Demon issues from it.)

*Spirit.*—In stones there are spirits:

In the waters is a voice heard:

The winds blow across the firmament!

*Cho.*—Oh! horror! horror!

The Death-stone's rent in twain;

The Demon stands revealed!

*Priest.*—Oh! horror! horror!

The Death-stone's rent in twain:

O'er moor and field  
A lurid glare  
Burns fierce. There stands revealed  
A fox—and yet again  
The phantom seems to wear  
The aspect of a maiden fair!

*Spirit.*—No more the mystery can be concealed.

I am she, who first, in Ind, was the demon to whom Prince Han-zoku paid homage at the murderous mound. In Great Cathay, I took the form of Hō-ji, consort of the Emperor Yū-ō; and at the Court of the Rising Sun I was the "Flawless Jewel Maiden," concubine to the Emperor Toba-no-In.

Intent on the destruction of the crown and empire of Japan, I assumed the shape of a fair maiden, whose presence caused the Imperial person to languish in disease. Already was I exulting in the thought of sending him to the grave, when Abé-no-Yasunari, the Court Magician, directed against me his powers of exorcism; he set up the many-colored symbols of the gods upon the altar, and gave them also into my hands.

*Cho.*—With fervent zeal the Great Magician prays:

The Demon hears with tremulous amaze  
The solemn exorcism, whose every word  
Pierces her spirit like a two-edged sword.  
Not long such pain and terror can be borne:  
Awed into silence, and with anguish torn,  
She spreads her wings, she rises on the wind,  
Nor dares to cast one fearful glance behind.  
Away! away! o'er lands and seas she soars,  
Nor rests until she gains these distant moors.

*Spirit.*—Then the Mikado issued his commands.

To the two satraps of the neighb'ring lands:  
"Drive out," spake he, "the Fox, the Demon foul!"  
And they, obedient to the word, enroll  
Skilled marksmen, who, for five-score days and more,  
Practice on dogs, to make their arch'ry sure.  
May we not thus trace back to that command  
The custom of dog-shooting in our land?

Then the two satraps, armed with bow and spear,  
And myriad horsemen brought from far and near,  
Beat all the moor, surround its every part;  
Thick as the hail-storm fly the spear and dart.  
And I, poor Fox, all hope of rescue flown,  
Wounded and dying on the heath sink down.  
But yet my ghost (though, like the morning dew,  
'Twas wrapt away from grosser human view)  
Ceas'd not to haunt this distant, des'late moor,  
And in the Death-stone dwelt its fatal power,  
Which, ever watchful, both by day and night,  
In murd'ring weary wand'rers took delight—  
Till thou, Great Buddha, send'st thy priest this way.  
Then did religion reassert her sway,  
Breaking my chains asunder, and the spell  
Which bound me captive to the powers of hell:  
"I swear, O man of God, I swear," she cries,  
"To thee whose blessing wafts me to the skies,  
I swear a solemn oath, that shall endure  
Firm as the Death-stone standing on the moor,  
That from this hour I'm God's for e'er and e'er!"  
She spake and vanished into thinnest air.

The *Death-stone* is one of the very few works of a popular character which belong to the ancient literature of Japan. Almost everything extant belonging to that literature was written for the learned circles around the court, and thus was adapted only to the minds of the cultured classes. Later, beginning, perhaps, with the twelfth century, when the learned devoted themselves chiefly to the study of Chinese, the cultivation of the Japanese language was in a great measure abandoned to the ladies of the court. A very large proportion of the best writings of the best age of Japanese literature was the work of women, and the names of many female

writers, especially of poetry, are quoted with admiration even at the present day.

In early times Kiôto was the principal, if not the only, seat of learning in Japan. Interminable wars and feuds kept the inhabitants of the eastern portion of the empire too fully occupied with military affairs to allow of their being able to engage in learned and peaceful pursuits, even had they so desired. But the court of the mikado at Kiôto enjoyed a far more tranquil existence, and the nobles composing that court devoted themselves with zest to the pursuit of letters. Poetry was held in the highest honor and received the greatest share of attention.

Of late years Japanese literature has received far more attention and more careful study, if we are to judge from the number of recently published works, as compared with those existing even a century ago. This is mainly due to the introduction of printing presses with movable types. Many of the old manuscripts have been set up in type and published in the modern style, so that there is no longer any great difficulty in procuring specimens of the ancient poetry and ancient drama of Japan.

RETNAVÁLI;  
OR,  
THE NECKLACE.

By SRI HERSHA DEVA, King of Cashmir.

*(Translated from the Original Sanskrit by Horace Hayman  
Wilson, M.A., F.R.S.)*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

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*VATSA*—King of Kausambi.

*YAUGANDARAYANA*—The King's Chief Minister.

*VASANTAKA*—The King's Confidential Companion.

*VASUBHRITI*—Ambassador of the King of Sinhala.

*BABHRAVYA*—Envoy from Vatsa to King of Sinhala.

*SAMVARANA SIDDHA*—A Magician.

*VIJAYA VERMA*—An Officer of Vatsa's Army.

*VASAVADATTA*—Queen of Vatsa.

*RETNAVALI* or *SAGARIKA*—Princess of Sinhala.

*KANSCHANAMALA*—The Queen's Attendant.

*SASANGATA*—Friend of Sagarika.

*NIPUNIKA,*

*MADANOKA,*

*CHUTALATIKA,*

*VASUNDHARA,*

} Female Attendants.

SCENE—THE PALACE OF VATSA IN KAUSAMBI.

### Prelude.

The drama here presented is valuable as a picture of Hindoo manners in a sphere of life secluded from common observation at a period at least as remote as the beginning of the twelfth century. The story is romantic, the incidents are well contrived, the situations are strongly dramatic, and the interest is skillfully maintained. The intrigue results from the combination of accidental circumstances and premeditated designs.

### ACT I.

SCENE—THE PALACE OF VATSA.

Enter Yaugandaráyana.

*Yaugandaráyana.*—'Tis true! fate, if propitious, soon restores the absent, and from remotest isles, the wastes of ocean, and the bounds of earth, safe gives them to us again—else how chanced it that the fair daughter of the king of Lanká, whom, as directed by the seer, we had sent to obtain, and who was by her father, with rich gifts, consigned a bride to our illustrious prince, escaped annihilation? Borne on a plank, the relic of her shattered bark, a merchant of Kausámbí found her floating in mid-sea. Her costly necklace spoke her of no common rank, whence with all honor she was treated, and to our capital conveyed. Fate still smiled upon our sovereign. I have trans-

ferred the maiden to the honorable keeping of the queen; and now I hear our chamberlain, Bábhavya, and Vasubhúti, the minister of Sinhalá, who had accompanied the princess, having by some means reached the shore, are on their way hither, having been encountered by Rumanwán on his march to chastise the king of Kosalá. I have little need to fear the end of this; but faithful service ever has its cares. The elevation of my master's power is my aim, and destiny coöperates with my design—neither can the seer prophetic err. The king himself alone I doubt, for still he loves to follow where his own inclinations lead—(a noise behind). Hark! the mellow drum, accompanied with song and shouts, indicates the clamorous rejoicings of the multitude. I suspect the king has come forth to behold from his palace the frolic merriment with which his subjects celebrate the festival of Kámadeva. Ah yes, I see him on the terrace: wearied of tales of war, and seeking most his reputation in his people's hearts, he issues forth attended by his companion Vasantaka, like the flower-armed deity himself, descended to take a part in the happiness of his worshippers. I will retire to my dwelling, and meditate in tranquillity the measures best adapted to insure us a fortunate termination of the task we have begun. (Exit.)

(Vatsa Rájá, discovered seated, dressed as for the Spring festival, and attended by Vasantaka.)

*Vatsa.*—My friend!

*Vasantaka.*—Your majesty!

*Vats.*—I scarcely can express the content I now enjoy. My kingdom is rid of every foe, the burden of my government reposes on able shoulders, the seasons are favorable, and my subjects prosperous and happy. In the daughter of Pradyota I have a wife whom I adore, and in thee, Vasantaka, a friend in whom I can confide. Attended by thee, thus, at such a season, and so disposed, I might fancy myself the deity of desire, and this vernal celebration held in honor of myself.

*Vas.*—Excuse me. Since you admit me to be a part of it, I shall even claim the whole; and, so highly exalted by your regard, I shall maintain that the festival is mine. Observe the general joy. As if intoxicated with delight, the people dance



along the streets, sporting merrily with each other's persons, and mutually scattering the yellow-tinted fluid. On every side the music of the drum and the buzz of frolic crowds fill all the air. The very atmosphere is of a yellow hue, with clouds of flowery fragrance.

*Vats.*—Yon lofty mansion opposite to us is occupied by a merry band. I knew not that Kausámbí was so wealthy!—She outvies the residence of the god of wealth. Her numerous sons are clad in cloth of gold, sprinkled with the fragrant dust of the color of dawn, or tinted with the saffron dye, decked with glittering ornaments and tossing their heads proudly with splendid crests, fit for Káma himself. The soil, plashy with the frequent shower and tread of numerous feet, is converted into vermilion paste, as the artificial bloom is washed down from the cheeks of the maidens and mingled with the ground.

*Vas.*—See where a colored shower falls on a thick and struggling crowd, shrinking in vain from the mischievous pipes of those mirthful maids.

*Vats.*—I should compare the city to the subterranean world, where the snake gods dwell. The mischievous pipes are crested snakes—the scattering dust of yellow fragrance sheds unearthly dimness, and the gleaming tiaras dart through it such radiance as beams from the serpent jewels.

*Vas.*—Look, Sir, where Madaniká and Chútalatiká approach us: their gestures indicate the influence of the divinity of the season.

Enter Madaniká and Chútalatiká, two of the Queen's Attendants, dancing and singing.

*Madanika.*—Cool from southern mountains blowing,

Freshly swells the grateful breeze,  
Round with lavish bounty throwing  
Fragrance from the waving trees;  
To men below and gods above,  
The friendly messenger of love.

*Chútalatiká.*—Lightly from the green stem shaken,

Balmy flowrets scent the skies—  
Warm from youthful bosoms waken

Infant passion's ardent sighs.  
 And many a maid around is roaming,  
 Anxious for her lover's coming.

*Both.*—Nor alone the tender blossom  
 Opens to the smiling day,  
 Lordly man's expanding bosom  
 Buds beneath the genial ray,  
 Offering to the flowery dart,  
 Of love, a soft and yielding heart.

*Vats.*—I perceive, indeed, the influence of the season expressed in their appearance. The fillet of the one is loosened, and her long tresses float dishevelled to the air: the necklace of the other seems too weighty for her languid frame, though she plies her tinkling anklets with more than wonted activity.

*Vas.*—I will gird up my garb and join them, shall I, in compliment to the festival?

*Vats.*—If you please.

*Vas.*—(Descends.) Come, Madaniká, teach me your poem.

*Mad.*—A poem, you simpleton! it is no poem.

*Vas.*—What is it, then?

*Mad.*—A ballad.

*Vas.*—Oh, a ballad! if that is the case, I wish you good-bye.

*Mad.*—You must not leave us.

*Vas.*—Consider my character. (They hold him and sprinkle him with yellow powder, till he breaks away.) Here I am at last, my good friend: I have been in jeopardy.

*Chút.*—Come, we have amused ourselves long enough; let us bear the queen's message to his majesty.

*Mad.*—Come on (approaching Vatsa). Glory to your majesty. So please you, the queen commands—I crave pardon, requests.

*Vats.*—Nay, Madaniká, you are quite correct; the queen commands, particularly at a season sacred to the god of love. What are her orders?

*Mad.*—She is bound to-day to offer homage to the image of

the flower-armed deity, which stands at the foot of the red asoka tree in the garden of the palace, and requests your majesty's presence at her devotions.

*Vats.*—You see, my friend, how one festival begets another.

*Vas.*—Let us go thither. I will officiate as your priest, and I hope my benediction will not be wholly unproductive.

*Vats.*—Go, Madaniká, and let the queen know that we shall meet her in the garden.

*Mad.*—As your majesty commands. (Exeunt.)

*Vats.*—Come, my friend, lead the way to the garden. (They descend and proceed.)

*Vas.*—This is the place, Sir. Behold the rich canopy of the pollen of the mango blossoms, wafted above our heads by the southern breeze, and the chorus bursts from the köils and the bees to hail your approach.

*Vats.*—The garden is now most lovely. The trees partake of the rapturous season—their new leaves glow like coral, their branches wave with animation in the wind, and their foliage resounds with the blithe murmurs of the bee. The bakula blossoms lie around its root like ruby wine; the champaka flowers blush with the ruddiness of youthful beauty; the bees give back in harmony the music of the anklets, ringing melodiously as the delicate feet are raised against the stem of the asoka tree.

*Vas.*—No, no; it is not the bees who mimic the ringing of the anklets; 'tis the queen with her train approaching.

*Vats.*—You are right; they are at hand. (They retire.)

Enter Vāsavadattá the Queen, Kánchanamálá, Ságariká, and other damsels attending.

*Vāsavadattá.*—Now, Kánchanamálá, where is the garden?

*Kánchanamálá.*—This is it, madam.

*Vāsava.*—And where the red asoka tree, at the foot of which I am to pay offerings to Madana?

*Kánch.*—It is in sight. This is the mádhaví creeper, your majesty's own plant; it is now rich with blossoms. This is

the plant his majesty takes such care of, the jasmine that he expects to blossom out of season:—now we pass it, and this is the tree.

*Vāsava*.—Very well; where are the offerings?

*Sāgarikā*.—Here, madam. (Presenting them.)

*Vāsava*.—(Looking at her, then aside.) What carelessness! an object I have hitherto so cautiously concealed, thus heedlessly exposed: it shall be so. (Aloud.) How now, *Sāgarikā*, what make you here; where is my favorite starling that I left to your charge, and whom it seems you have quitted for this ceremony? Away! deliver the oblations to *Kānchanamālā*, and return.

*Sāgar*.—As your majesty pleases. (Gives the offerings and withdraws to a short distance.) The bird is safe with my friend *Susangatā*. I should like to witness the ceremony. I wonder if *Ananga* is worshipped here as in my father's mansion! I will keep myself concealed amongst these shrubs and watch them, and for my own presentation to the deity I will go cull a few of these flowers. (Retires.)

*Vāsava*.—Now, place the divine *Pradyumna* at the foot of the tree.

*Kānch*.—(Arranges the offering.) It is done, madam.

*Vats*.—Come, *Vasantaka*, they are ready; let us join them. The queen stands by the side of the god of the fish-emblazoned banner, as slight and graceful as his own bow, and as delicate as the flowers that tip his shafts. My love, *Vāsavadattā*!

*Vāsava*.—My lord! Victory attend him: let him honor our rites by his presence!—That is his regal seat.

*Kānch*.—Now, let her majesty commence the ceremony, and to the god, whose station is the red *asoka* tree, present the accustomed gifts of sandal, saffron and flowers.

*Vāsava*.—Give them to me.

*Kānch*.—(Presents them severally to the queen, who offers them to the image.)

*Vats*.—Whilst thus employed, my love, you resemble a graceful creeper twining round a coral tree; your robes of the orange dye, your person fresh from the bath. As rests your

hand upon the stem of the asoka, it seems to put forth a new and lovelier shoot. The unembodied god to-day will regret his disencumbered essence, and sigh to be material, that he might enjoy the touch of that soft hand.

*Káñch.*—The worship of the divinity concluded, be pleased, madam, to pay adoration to your lord.

*Vásava.*—Where are flowers and unguent?

*Káñch.*—Here, madam.

(*Vásavadattá* worships the king.)

*Ságar.*—(Returns.) I have idled my time whilst gathering these flowers, so that I fear the ceremony is over; behind this tree I can observe them undiscovered. What do I see! can this be true? Does then the deity, whose effigy only we adore in the dwelling of my father, here condescend to accept in person the homage of his votaries! I, too, though thus remote, present my humble offering. (Throws down the flowers.) Glory to the flower-armed god: may thy auspicious sight both now and hereafter prove not to have been vouchsafed to me in vain! (Bows down, then rising looks again.) The sight, though oft repeated, never wearies. I must tear myself from this, lest some one should discover me. (Withdraws a little.)

*Káñch.*—Approach, *Vasantaka*, and receive your portion.

*Vásava.*—Accept, most worthy Sir, these propitiatory presents. (Gives *Vasantaka* sandal, flowers and jewels.)

*Vas.*—May prosperous fortune ever be your fate!

(The Bard behind.)

The sun from his diurnal road declines,  
And in the west with flaming radiance glows—  
Like some illustrious prince, whose glory shines  
Intensest as his days approach their close.  
The moon comes forth amidst the evening sky,  
With aspect as our youthful monarch's bright,  
To soothe the night flower's love-empassioned sigh,  
And at thy feet to shed his sacred light.

*Ságar.*—How! (returning). Is this *Udayana*, to whom my

father destined me a bride! The sight of him has purified my person from the contaminating gaze of others.

*Vats.*—The twilight has drawn in, and we have been insensible of the course of time, our minds engrossed by holy and delightful duties. Look, madam, where the pale eastern sky, like a love-lorn damsel, seems to sicken with impatience for the coming of her lord. Let us rise and return to the palace. (They rise.)

*Ságar.*—They come! I must fly hence. Ah me, unhappy! no longer to behold him whom I could gaze upon forever.

*Vats.*—Come, love, thou puttest the night to shame. The beauty of the moon is eclipsed by the loveliness of thy countenance, and the lotus sinks humbled into shade—the sweet songs of thy attendant damsels discredit the murmur of the bees, and, mortified, they hasten to hide their disgrace within the flowery blossom. (Exeunt.)

## ACT II.

### THE GARDEN OF THE PALACE.

Enter Susangatá with a Sáríká, or talking bird, in'a cage.

*Susangatá.*—What can have become of Ságáriká? She left this bird in my charge, and went I know not whither. Here comes Nipuniká!

Enter Nipuniká.

*Nipuniká.*—These tidings his majesty has charged me with, I must use dispatch in conveying to the queen. (Going.)

*Sus.*—How now! Nipuniká, what engrosses your thoughts, that you pass as if you saw me not—whither, in such haste?

*Nip.*—I will tell you. We have a great sage come to court, the venerable Srikhanda Dás, from Sri Parvat. He has taught the king the craft of making flowers blossom at any season, and his majesty being about to exercise his new art upon his favorite jasmine, sends me to request the queen's presence. But where are you going?

*Sus.*—To look for Ságáriká.

*Nip.*—I passed her just now; she had a brush and pallet as

if about to paint a picture, and went into the plantain bower: you will find her there, I dare say. Adieu! I must to our mistress. (Exeunt severally.)

A PLANTAIN BOWER OR HALL.

Enter Ságariká, with a picture.

*Ságariká.*—Be still, my foolish heart, nor idly throb for one so high above thy hopes. Why thus anxious again to behold that form, one only view of which has inspired such painful agitation? Ungrateful, too, as weak, to fly the breast that has been familiar to thee through life, and seek another, and as yet, but once beheld, asylum. Alas! why do I blame thee: the terror of Ananga's shaft has rendered thee a fugitive;—let me implore his pity. Lord of the flowery bow, victor of demons and of gods! dost thou not blush to waste thy might upon a weak defenseless maiden, or art thou truly without form or sense? Ah me! I fear my death impends, and this the fatal cause (looking at the picture). No one approaches; I will try and finish the likeness I am here attempting to portray (looking at the picture). My heart beats high, my hand trembles, yet I must try, and, whilst occasion favors me, attempt to complete these lineaments, as the only means to retain them in my sight. (Draws.)

Enter Susangatá.

*Sus.*—This is the plantain bower. Ha! she is here, and apparently so intent upon some painting that she does not notice my approach. I will keep out of her sight and look at what she is doing. (Approaches gently and looks over Ságariká.) How!—the king's picture! well done, Ságariká! but so it is: the royal swan leaves not the lotus-crowded lake to sport elsewhere.

*Ság.*—It is finished, but in vain; my tears veil the picture from my sight. (Raises her head, and, beholding Susangatá, hides the picture.) How, Susangatá! sit down.

*Sus.*—(Sits down and puts her hand upon the picture.) Who is this you have delineated?

*Ság.*—The deity of this festival, Ananga.

*Sus.*—It is cleverly done, but there wants a figure to complete it. Let me have it and I will give the god his bride. (Takes the paper and draws.)

*Ság.*—(Angrily.) Hey, Susangatá! what mean you; you have sketched my likeness?

*Sus.*—Do not be offended without cause. I have given your Kámadeva my Retí, that is all. But come, away with disguise and confess the truth.

*Ság.*—(Apart.) My friend has discovered my secret. (Aloud.) My dear friend, I am overcome with shame—promise me that nobody else shall be made acquainted with my weakness?

*Sus.*—Why should you be ashamed?—attachment to exalted worth becomes your native excellence. But be assured I will not betray you; it is more likely this prattling bird will repeat our conversation.

*Ság.*—Alas! my friend, my agitation overpowers me.

*Sus.*—(Placing her hands on Ságariká's heart.) Be composed, be composed! I will bring some leaves and fibres of the water-lily from this lake. (Brings some leaves and fibres of the lotus, and binds the former with the latter upon Ságariká's bosom.)

*Ság.*—Enough, enough, my friend; take away these leaves and fibres—it is vain to offer me relief. I have fixed my heart where I dare not raise my hopes. I am overcome with shame—I am enslaved by passion—my love is without return—death my only refuge. (Faints.)

(A noise behind.)

The monkey has escaped from the stable and rattling the ends of his broken chain of gold, he clatters along as if a number of female feet, bound with tinkling anklets, were in sportive motion. Chased by the grooms and frightening the women, he has bounded through the inner gate. The unmanly eunuchs, lost to shame, fly from his path, and the dwarf takes shelter in the jacket of the chamberlain. The Kirátas who guard the surrounding walls are true to their designation, and bowing themselves lowly through fear, are ashamed to look each other in the face.



*Sus.*—Up, up, my dear friend! the wild brute is coming hither.

*Ság.*—What shall we do?

*Sus.*—Hide in the shade of this tamála grove: haste, he comes! (Exeunt.)

SCENE—ANOTHER PART OF THE GARDEN.

Enter Ságariká and Susangatá.

*Ság.*—What has become of the drawing: did you leave it behind? some one will discover it.

*Sus.*—Never heed the picture now. The ape has broken the cage to get at the curds and rice, and let the sáriká fly: let us endeavor to recover her, or she will repeat what has passed between us.

*Behind.*—Astonishing, astonishing!

*Ság.*—Hey, Susangatá, is that the ape coming?

*Sus.*—No, coward; it is the worthy Vasantaka, our royal master's friend. Let us hence, the sáriká is far away.

*Ság.*—I attend you. (Exeunt.)

Enter Vasantaka.

*Vasantaka.*—Very strange, indeed! most marvelous! the power of Srikhanda Dás is most surprising, by whose simple will the jasmine has been covered with countless buds, as if smiling disdainfully upon the queen's favorite mádhaví. I will go and tell my friend what has happened. Ah! yonder he comes, looking quite confident of his hopes, and as pleased as if he looked upon the jasmine blossoming in his presence. His eye sparkles with pleasure: I will join him. (Exit.)

SCENE—ANOTHER PART OF THE GARDEN.

Enter Vatsa.

*Vatsa.*—I shall make the queen turn pale with anger. She will look upon the creeper like a rival beauty, as the delicate shrub displays the brilliance of its nascent buds, and swells, as gently inflated with the zephyr's sighs.

*Vas.*—(Approaches.) Victory to your majesty!—fortune is propitious.

*Vats.*—I doubt it not, my friend; for inconceivable is the virtue of drugs, and charms, and gems. Lead the way, and let these eyes this day obtain by the sight the fruit of their formation.

*Vas.*—This way.

*Vats.*—Precede.

*Vas.*—(Advances and stops to listen: he turns back in alarm.) Fly, fly, Sir!

*Vats.*—Why?

*Vas.*—There is a goblin in yonder bakula tree!

*Vats.*—Away, simpleton, go on, and fear not! how should any such being have power at this season to harm?

*Vas.*—He speaks quite distinctly—if you disbelieve me advance and listen.

*Vats.*—(Advances.) I hear a distinct voice, and a sweet one, too, like that of a woman: from its small and sharp tone it must be a starling. (Looking up.) Ah! there she sits.

*Vas.*—A starling?

*Vats.*—(Laughing.) A starling; look there!

*Vas.*—And so, my good friend, your fears made you fancy a starling to be a goblin.

*Vats.*—Out on you, blockhead! would you accuse me of what you have done yourself?

*Vas.*—Well, now do not interfere. (Holds up his staff.) You impertinent bird, have you no more respect for a Brahman: stop a moment, and with this crooked staff I will bring you down from the tree like a ripe wood-apple.

*Vats.*—Forbear, forbear! how prettily she talks.

*Vas.*—Yes, now I listen again, she says, give this Brahman something to eat.

*Vats.*—Something to eat is ever the burden of the glutton's song. Come, say truly, what does she utter?

*Vas.*—(Listening and repeating.) "Who is this you have delineated? Do not be offended without cause; I have given your Kâmadeva, my Retí." Hey, Sir! what should this mean?

*Vats.*—Oh, I suppose some female has been drawing her lover's portrait and passing it off on her companion as the picture of the god of love: her friend has found her out, and ingeniously exposed her evasion by delineating her in the character of Kâma's bride.

*Vas.*—Very likely.

*Vats.*—Be still, she speaks again. (They listen.)

*Vas.*—(Repeating.) "Why should you be ashamed; attachment to exalted worth becomes your native excellence."

*Vats.*—Likely, likely!

*Vas.*—Nay, do not you presume upon your scholarship; I will expound all she says, when she has finished. The lady that is pictured is very handsome.

*Vats.*—We shall have leisure to satisfy our curiosity; let us now listen.

*Vas.*—Very well; do you hear what she says: "Take away these lotus leaves and fibres—it is in vain you strive to offer me relief."

*Vats.*—I hear and understand.

*Vas.*—How the jade chatters to-day! but I will explain all I hear.

*Vats.*—Very likely, but now listen.

*Vas.*—Hey!—I declare she speaks in measure, like a Brahman skilled in the four Vedas.

*Vats.*—What said she, I did not hear?

*Vas.*—"I have fixed my heart where I dare not raise my hopes;—I am overcome with shame and despair, and death is my only refuge."

*Vats.*—With the exception of yourself, my worthy friend, what learned Brahman would call this speaking in measure?

*Vas.*—Why, what is it?

*Vats.*—Prose.

*Vas.*—Prose! Oh, very well, and what does it mean?

*Vats.*—Some young female may be supposed to have spoken the sentence, indifferent to life, because uncertain of her affection being returned.

*Vas.*—(Laughing loudly.) You may as well drop these evasive interpretations: why not say at once, "The damsel doubts my returning her passion." Who but yourself could have been delineated as the god of the flowery bow? (Claps his hands and laughs.)

*Vats.*—Peace, simpleton! your obstreperous mirth has frightened the bird away; see! there she flies.

*Vas.*—She has perched on the plantain bower: let us follow her.

*Vats.*—Oppressed by the shafts of Káma, the delicate maid entrusts her companions with the sorrows of her breast: the tattling parrot or imitative starling repeats her words, and they find a hospitable welcome in the ears of the fortunate. (Exeunt.)

#### THE PLANTAIN BOWER.

Enter Vatsa and Vasantaka.

*Vas.*—Here is the bower; let us enter: but what has become of the starling? No matter; let us rest on this bench, where the breeze breathes cool and soft amidst the waving leaves of these bananas.

*Vats.*—As you please. (They sit.)

*Vas.*—What is yonder? It looks like the cage of the starling—broken to pieces most probably by the monkey.

*Vats.*—See what it is.

*Vas.*—I will. (Looking about.) What's here, a picture—takes it up). Ha, ha! my friend, you are in luck.

*Vats.*—What is that?

*Vas.*—Just what I said: here is your likeness. Who but yourself could have been delineated as the god of the flowery bow?

*Vats.*—Give it me.

*Vas.*—Stop a little. What! is such a jewel of a girl as is here pictured to be seen for nothing?

*Vats.*—Take this. (Gives him a golden bracelet, and Vasantaka delivers the picture.) Ha! behold, my friend; what lovely swan is this that wings her flight to Mánasa, in whose

sports the lotus trembles, who declares such auspicious fortune shall befall us, and whose face might be taken for the full moon by Brahmá, when he first emerged from his lotus throne — (looking at the picture).

Enter Susangatá and Ságariká.

*Sus.*—It is hopeless to follow the bird; let us get the drawing again, therefore, and go in.

*Ság.*—By all means.

*Vas.*—(To the king.) Well, my friend, who is this damsel, think you, that seems to bend her head so humbly?

*Sus.*—Hark! I hear Vasanta talking—I suspect to the king; let us conceal ourselves amongst the plants and hear what they are talking of. (They hide behind the plantain trees.)

*Vats.*—Brahmá, when he first emerged from his lotus throne, had taken such a face for the unrivalled orb of the moon.

*Sus.*—(To Ságariká.) You are in luck, girl; your lover is dwelling upon your praises.

*Ság.*—How can you make so light of me as to treat me as matter for your mirth?

*Vas.*—Why should she hang down her head in this manner?

*Vats.*—Has not the starling told us all?

*Sus.*—There! I told you so; that bird has repeated our conversation.

*Ság.*—(To herself.) What will be reply? I hang between life and death!

*Vas.*—Well, and does she please your eyes?

*Vats.*—Please my eyes, say you? My sight insatiate rests upon her graceful limbs and slender waist: reluctantly it rises to her budding bosom, and thence ascending, fixes on those soft, expressive orbs, where tremulously hangs the crystal tear.

*Sus.*—Did you hear?

*Ság.*—Did you hear? he praises the artist's skill!

*Vas.*—Well, Sir, and what dullness must there be in you,

not to perceive that in this, the object of the damsel's affection, your resemblance is exhibited?

*Vats.*—I cannot deny that she has flatteringly delineated my likeness, nor doubt her sentiments,—for observe the traces of the tear that has fallen upon her work, like the moist dew that starts from every pore of my frame.

*Ság.*—(To herself.) Heart, be of good cheer! your passion is directed to a corresponding object.

*Sus.*—My friend, you are fortunate; we must treat you now with the deference due to her whom our master loves.

*Vas.*—(Looking round.) Here are other traces of her passion: the lotus leaves she has applied to her heart whilst revealing her affection to her friend.

*Vats.*—You have guessed well. Where it has been in contact with her form the leaf has faded, but is still green where the contour of her well-proportioned shape has interposed an interval between the verdure and her person. The central freshness of the lotus leaf that has reposed upon her bosom reveals not the fervor of her love, but these two pallid circles on either side betray the violence of her affection.

*Vas.*—(Picking up the fibre.) Here is another vestige—it has bound the lotus leaf upon her bosom.

*Vats.*—(Applying it to his heart.) It still dispenses its cooling freshness. Say, fibre, art thou withered, because thou art no longer cherished between those palpitating orbs, whose friendly contiguity scarce leaves room for the lodgment of a silken thread, much less for thee.

*Sus.*—(Apart.) His grace must be violently affected to talk thus incoherently. It will not become me to leave him to these fancies. (To *Ságariká*.) Well, my friend, what you came for is before you.

*Ság.*—Why, what did I come for, pray?

*Sus.*—The picture, what else? there it is—take it.

*Ság.*—(Angrily.) As I don't understand what you say, I shall leave you. (Going.)

*Sus.*—How now, impatient! stop a moment, and I will recover the drawing before we leave this place.

*Ság.*—Do so.

(Susangatá comes forward, so as to be seen by Vasantaka.)

*Vas.*—Hide the picture, here, in this plantain leaf—here comes one of the queen's damsels. (Vatsa covers it with his mantle.)

*Sus.*—(Advancing.) Glory to the king!

*Vats.*—Welcome, Susangatá; sit down. How knew you that I was here?

*Sus.*—That is not all my knowledge; I am acquainted with the secret of the picture, and some other matters, of which I shall apprise her majesty. (Going.)

*Vas.*—(Apart to Vatsa.) It is all blown—she is a great tattler—better bribe her to be silent.

*Vats.*—Stay, Susangatá; accept these ornaments. (Takes off his bracelet, etc.) This is but a matter of sport, not to be mentioned to the queen.

*Sus.*—Your grace is bountiful, you need not fear me. I was but in jest, and do not want these jewels. The truth is, my dear friend, Sagariká, is very angry with me for drawing her picture, and I shall be much obliged to your majesty to intercede for me and appease her resentment.

*Vats.*—(Springing up.) Where is she? lead me to her!

*Vas.*—Give me the picture—I will take care of it; it may again be wanted.

*Sus.*—This way. (They advance.)

*Ság.*—He is here—I tremble at his sight.—I can neither stand nor move—what shall I do?

*Vas.*—(Seeing her.) A most surprising damsel, truly; such another is not to be found in this world. I am confident that when she was created Brahmá was astonished at his own performance.

*Vats.*—Such are my impressions. The four mouths of Brahmá must at once have exclaimed in concert, bravo, bravo! when the deity beheld these eyes more beautiful than the leaves of his own lotus, and his heads must have shaken with wonder, as he contemplated loveliness, the ornament of all the world.

*Ság.*—(To Susangata.) This is the picture you have brought. (Going.)

*Vats.*—You turn your eyes upon your friend in anger, lovely maid; yet such is their native tenderness they cannot assume a harsh expression. Look thus, but do not leave us, for your departure hence will alone give me pain.

*Sus.*—She is very angry, Sir, I assure you; take her hand and pacify her.

*Vats.*—You advise me well (Takes *Ságariká* by the hand.)

*Vas.*—I congratulate you, Sir; you enjoy unprecedented fortune.

*Vats.*—You say rightly—she is the very deity *Lakshmi* herself: her hand is the new shoot of the *párijáta* tree, else whence distil these dew-drops of ambrosia?

*Sus.*—It is not possible, my dear friend, you can remain inexorable whilst honored thus with his grace's hand.

*Ság.*—(Frowning.) Will you not forbear, *Susangatá*?

*Vats.*—Nay, you must not be angry with your friend.

*Vas.*—Why, like a hungry Brahman, should you thus be out of humor, lady?

*Sus.*—Very well, my friend, I will say no more.

*Vats.*—This is not right, resentful girl, to be so unfor- giving to your intimate companions.

*Vas.*—Hey! here again is *Madam Vásavadattá*.

(The *Raja* lets go *Ságariká's* hand in alarm.)

*Ság.*—(To *Susangatá*.) What shall I do?

*Sus.*—We can escape unperceived behind this *tamála* tree. (They go off hastily.)

*Vats.*—(Looking round.) Why, my friend, where is the queen, where is *Vásavadattá*?

*Vas.*—I do not know. I said, here again is *Madam Vásavadattá*; I meant in testiness of temper.

*Vats.*—Out on thee! thou hast rudely snapped the string of splendid gems, that fate and acknowledged love had hung around my neck. (They retire.)



Enter Vāsavadattā the Queen, and Kānchanamālā, an attendant.

Vāsavadattā.—Well, girl, how far from hence is my lord's favorite jasmine tree?

Kānchanamālā.—It is but a little way farther: we shall see it after passing this plantain bower.

Vāsava.—Let us hasten.

Kānch.—I think I see his majesty. Yes, there he is; will it please you join him?

Vāsava.—(Approaching Vatsa.) Glory to my lord!

Vats.—(To Vasantaka.) Hide the picture—quick.

(Vasantaka takes it and holds it under his arm.)

Vāsava.—Has the jasmine budded yet, my lord?

Vats.—I have been waiting your arrival, and have not yet seen it; we will now visit it together.

Vāsava.—Oh no—I see by your countenance that it has flowered: that is sufficient, I will go no further.

Vas.—Then your grace acknowledges we have conquered! huzza! (Waves his hand and dances; the picture falls; the Raja observes it, looks at him angrily and points to the picture.)

Vas.—(Apart to Vatsa.) Be calm; I will manage it.

Kānch.—(Picking up the picture and showing it to the queen.) See, madam, whose portrait is this?

Vāsava.—(Looking at it and apart.) This is my lord, and is not this Sāgarikā? (Aloud to Vatsa.) Pray what is this, my lord?

Vats.—(To Vasantaka.) What shall I say?

Vas.—(To Vatsa.) Fear not, leave it to me. (Aloud to Vāsavadattā.) I was observing, madam, that it would be very difficult to hit my friend's likeness, on which his majesty was pleased to give me this specimen of his skill.

Vats.—It is as Vasantaka tells you.

Vāsava.—And this female standing near you—I suppose this is a specimen of Vasantaka's skill?

*Vats.*—What should you suspect? That is a mere fancy portrait; the original was never seen before.

*Vas.*—I'll swear to this, by my Brahmanical cord, that the original was never before seen by either of us.

*Káncb.*—(To the queen, apart.) Why should he speak evasively, madam? there is no need to be angry.

*Vásava.*—(To her.) My honest girl, you do not understand his prevarications. I know Vasantaka. (Aloud.) My lord, excuse me. Looking at this picture has given me a slight headache. I leave you to your amusements. (Going.)

*Vats.*—What can I say to you, dearest? I really am at a loss! If I ask you to forgive me, that is unnecessary, if you are not offended; and how can I promise to do so no more, when I have committed no fault—although you will not believe my assertions.

*Vásava.*—(Detaching herself gently and with politeness.) You mistake, my lord; I assure you my head aches; on that account I take my leave. (Exit with Káncbanamálá.)

*Vas.*—Your majesty has had a lucky escape. The queen's anger has dispersed like summer clouds.

*Vats.*—Away, blockhead, we have no occasion to rejoice: could you not discover the queen's anger through her unsuccessful attempts to disguise it? Her face was clouded with a passing frown. As she hung down her head she looked on me with an affected smile. She gave utterance to no angry words 'tis true, and the swelling eye glowed not with rage—but a starting tear was with difficulty suppressed; and although she treated me with politeness, struggling indignation lurked in every gesture. We must follow and endeavor to pacify her. (Exeunt.)

### ACT III.

#### SCENE I—A CHAMBER IN THE PALACE.

Enter Madaniká, one of the queen's attendants.

*Madaniká.*—Ho, Kausámbiká! tell me if Káncbanamálá is with the queen? (Listening.) What say you; she came in

some time since and went out again; where can she be? Oh, she comes.

Enter Káncanamálá.

*Káncanamálá.*—Bravo, Vasantaka, bravo! you are a deeper politician than the prime minister himself.

*Mad.*—How now, fellow Káncanamálá, what has Vasantaka done to merit your praises?

*Kánc.*—What occasion is there for your asking? you are not able to keep the secret!

*Mad.*—I swear by the feet of the queen, I will not mention it to anybody.

*Kánc.*—On that condition you shall hear. As I was passing from the palace to-day I overheard Vasantaka and Susangatá in conversation behind the door of the picture gallery.

*Mad.*—What was the subject?

*Kánc.*—Vasantaka said Ságáriká alone is the cause of my friend's indisposition; do you, Susangatá, devise a remedy.

*Mad.*—And what replied she?

*Kánc.*—She said, the queen having discovered what was going forward by finding the picture, but not suspecting me, has placed Ságáriká under my charge—giving me, to insure my vigilance, some of her own clothes and ornaments. With these I will equip Ságáriká as the queen, and myself as Káncanamálá, and thus disguised will meet his majesty at the mádhava bower about sunset: do you come to this place and conduct us thither.

*Mad.*—Very well plotted, Susangatá; but you are mistaken, if you think to deceive a mistress so kind to her attendants.

*Kánc.*—And where are you going?

*Mad.*—I was coming to look for you. You were so long in bringing us an answer about his majesty's illness that the queen was very anxious and sent me to see what had become of you.

*Kánc.*—Her majesty is too simple, to be so easily deceived. But the king, whose only illness is love, is sitting in the pavilion over the ivory gate. Come along, let us carry this news to the queen.

## THE PAVILION.

(Vatsa discovered.)

*Vatsa*.—Endure, my heart, the fever love has kindled, and which the maid I sigh for can alone allay. Why reproach me with my folly for seeking to subdue thy fervors with the cooling sandal, instead of that lovely hand which was awhile in my grasp! The mind from its natural unsteadiness should be a difficult mark to hit; how happens it that the archer-god has lodged all his shafts in mine! Deity of the flowery bow, innumerable are those who may be struck with thy five arrows, and such as I am are notoriously thy aim. But in this is the usual state of things reversed, that I, singly, am pierced with thy countless darts, and am about to perish. Yet I suffer less on my own account than for poor Sāgarikā. She shrinks from every gaze, suspecting that her secret is discovered. If she observe two of her companions in conversation, she fancies herself the subject; and if they laugh, she thinks she is the object of their mirth. Alas, my love! thy uneasiness excites my compassion, and I share the dread thou sufferest from the glances of the queen, as they bend on thee with ill dissembled indignation.—How long Vasantaka delays! I have sent him to obtain some tidings of the maiden.

Enter Vasantaka.

*Vasantaka*.—(To himself.) Ha, ha! my friend, you will be better pleased to-day than when you ascended the throne of Kausāmbī, when you hear the agreeable news I bring you. Oh, there he is: he seems expecting me. Joy, joy, my friend; fortune is propitious and promises to accomplish your desire.

*Vats*.—How is Sāgarikā?

*Vas*.—In a little time you may judge for yourself.

*Vats*.—What, may I hope to see her soon?

*Vas*.—Why not, am I not your counsellor; I who laugh at the wisdom of Vrihaspatī?

*Vats*.—Admitted—there is nothing you cannot manage; but come, tell me, I long to hear the particulars.

*Vas*.—(Whispers in his ear.) There, you have the whole.

*Vats.*—This merits reward. (Gives him a bracelet.)

*Vas.*—(Takes it and puts it on.) Very becoming; a golden bracelet suits my arm. I will go and show it to my wife. (Going.)

*Vats.*—Stop, my friend, stop, another time will serve your purpose. How much of the day remains?

*Vas.*—(Looking.) See, my friend, the lord of a thousand rays approaches the bowers of the western mountain.

*Vats.*—True, the lord of the one-wheeled car having performed the circuit of the world, now purposes to suspend his labors till the morrow's dawn, and halting on the mountain's brow, he calls in his scattered rays, whose golden lines converging round his chariot look like the radiant spokes that shoot to their centre from the wide circumference of the spheres. As with assembled beams he rests upon the summit of the western hill, the lord of day thus breathes his farewell to the lotus: "Adieu, my beloved, my hour is come and I must depart: sleep dwell upon thy lids, till I again disturb thy slumbers." Let us therefore away to the mādHAVI bower, and be punctual to the time appointed by my fair.

*Vas.*—I attend you. The interval that separates the trees of the grove is lost, and they seem to form one close compacted mass. A dusky hue, like that of the hide of the buffalo or wild boar besmeared with mire, extends over the garden, and thick glooms spreading above the east, obscure the horizon.

*Vats.*—True: first gathering in the east, the deepening gloom successively obscures the other regions of the sky: becoming intenser as it proceeds, it steals the hue of Siva's neck, and mountains, trees and towns, the heavens and the earth, are hidden from our sight. Let us to the garden. (Exeunt.)

#### THE GARDEN.

Enter Vatsa and Vasantaka.

*Vas.*—This clump of trees should be the makaranda grove, but I am not quite certain: how shall we find the way?

*Vats.*—Go on, we are right, I know the path. The cham-paka trees are here, I smell their fragrance; and now the sindhuvāras; we now pass the cluster of bakulas, and here are

the pá tali trees: their various odor indicates their situation, and would enable us to track the walk were they concealed by twice the present gloom.

*Vas.*—Ha! here we are, this is the mádhavi bower. I know it by the perfume of the buds so tempting to the bees and the smoothness of the emerald pavement. Do you remain here whilst I go for Ságariká; I shall soon be back.

*Vats.*—Do not be long.

*Vas.*—Do not be impatient, my friend. I am back already. (Exit.)

*Vats.*—I wait you on this emerald seat. Who will take part with the inconstant swain, that abandons his old love for a new? The timid damsel that comes to her first assignation casts but a sidelong glance upon her beloved, and though she shrink not from his embrace, averts her countenance from his gaze. "Let me go," she murmurs repeatedly; "I will leave you!" but still submits to the gentle violence that prevents her departure. What heightened charms does a stolen interview bestow upon the amorous maid! How long Vasantaka delays! surely Vá sanvadattá has not heard of our design. (Retires.)

#### A CHAMBER.

Enter Vá savadattá and Ká nchanamálá.

*Vá savadattá.*—Can it be possible, wench, that Ságariká has promised to meet my lord disguised in my attire!

*Ká nchanamálá.*—I have told your majesty; but if we find Vasantaka at the door of the picture gallery, your doubts, I hope, will be removed.

*Vá sava.*—Let us thither. (Exeunt.)

#### CHAMBER LEADING TO THE PICTURE GALLERY.

Enter Vasantaka, disguised.

*Vas.*—I thought I heard the tread of feet; Ságariká approaches. (Retires.)

Enter Vá savadattá and Ká nchanamálá.

*Ká nch.*—This is the place, madam. Now to see if Vasantaka is here. (Snaps her fingers.)

*Vas.*—(Approaching.) Ha, Susangatá! well done: I declare I should have taken you for Kánchanamálá. Where is Ságariká?

*Kánch.*—(Pointing to Vāsavadattá.) There.

*Vas.*—Why, this is the very queen herself.

*Vāsava.*—(Alarmed and apart.) How! am I recognized!

*Vas.*—Come, Ságariká, this way.

*Kánch.*—(To the queen.) All's safe, madam. (Pointing to Vasantaka.) Ah! rogue, you will have cause to remember your words.

*Vas.*—Haste, haste, Ságariká! the deer-marked deity rises in the east. (Exeunt.)

#### A GROVE.

(Vatsa discovered.)

*Vats.*—Why is my heart so agitated when I expect an interview with my fair; or is it that the flame of love burns fiercest as it approaches its gratification, as the days are hottest when the rains are about to descend.

Enter Vasantaka, Vāsavadattá and Kánchanamálá.

*Vas.*—(To Vāsavadattá.) Lady Ságariká, I hear my friend muttering to himself his anxiety for your appearance; I will announce your arrival. (Vāsavadattá nods assent.) Fortune is propitious to your majesty; Ságariká is here!

*Vats.*—(Approaching her.) My beloved Ságariká, thy countenance is radiant as the moon, thy eyes are two lotus buds, thy hand is the full-blown flower, and thy arms its graceful filaments. Come thou, whose whole form is the shrine of ecstasy, come to my arms and allay the feverish pangs inflicted by the shapeless god.

*Vāsava.*—(Weeping, apart to Kánchanamálá.) Ah, girl! my lord now speaks his honest self—how soon will his tone be changed. Is not this incomprehensible?

*Kánch.*—It is so, indeed, madam; there is nothing so bad that it may not be expected from these abominable men.

*Vas.*—Come, Ságariká, take courage; speak to his majesty.

We have had the harsh tones of the angry Queen Vāsavadattā grating in our ears to-day; let them be now regaled with the melody of your sweet voice.

*Vāsava.*—(To Kānchanamālā, apart.) Hey, girl! I am accustomed to speak harshly? The worthy Vasantaka is very complimentary.

*Kānch.*—He will have cause to recollect this.

*Vas.*—See, my friend, the moon is up, and casts on every thing his rays as pallid as the maiden's cheek that whitens with resentment.

*Vats.*—See, love, the lord of night now stands upon the mountain's crest and throws his scattered rays around to emulate the radiance of thy cheek. But idle is his coming—does not thy countenance shame the beauty of the lotus! do not thine eyes diffuse dearer delight! What aid can he bring to the influence of the fish-bannered god, which is not wrought by a single glance of thine? Why should the moon show himself whilst thy resplendent charms are visible? And if he rises, proud of his store of nectar, does he not know thy lips may boast, too, of ambrosia!

*Vāsava.*—(Throwing off her veil.) Believe me still Sāgarikā, my good lord; your heart is so fascinated by her, you fancy you behold Sāgarikā in everything.

*Vats.*—(Apart.) How! the Queen Vāsavadattā! What is this?

*Vas.*—My life is in jeopardy—that is—what it is.

*Vats.*—(To the queen.) Forgive me, dearest.

*Vāsava.*—Address not this to me, my lord—the epithet is another's property.

*Vas.*—(Apart.) What is to be done! (Aloud.) Nay, madam! you are of too generous a spirit not to forgive this first offense of my dear friend.

*Vāsava.*—Worthy Vasantaka, the offense is mine, who have presumed to interrupt this intended interview.

*Vats.*—It is of no use to deny it. But hear me: I bow me to thy feet, and mark my forehead with their vermil dye, in hope to transfer thither the hue with which anger discolors thy moon-like countenance. (Falls at her feet.)



*Vāsava*.—Rise, my lord, rise! that wife must be unreasonable, indeed, who with such evidence of her lord's affection can presume to be offended. Be happy, I take my leave. (Going.)

*Vas*.—Nay, madam, be merciful; I am sure, if you quit his majesty in this posture, you will hereafter repent it.

*Vāsava*.—Away, fool! I know no reason for mercy nor repentance. (Exit with *Kānchanamālā*.)

*Vas*.—Your majesty may get up, the queen is gone. What is the use of weeping in a wood?

*Vats*.—What, gone, without relenting!

*Vas*.—Not so, either, for our limbs are whole.

*Vats*.—Out, simpleton! do you make a jest of this; you, by whose blundering this untoward accident has happened! The genuine regard our long and tender union his inspired will now appear pretended, and the impression of my inconstancy may render her unable to endure existence. No pang is so intolerable as that of unrequited affection.

*Vas*.—The queen is angry, that is a clear case; as to what she will do, that is by no means certain. In the meantime, is *Sāgarikā* alive or not?

*Vats*.—I was thinking of her. (They retire.)

Enter *Sāgarikā* (behind), dressed as the queen.

*Sāgarikā*.—I have luckily got clear of the music hall, and have come so far in this disguise without being observed. But, alas! what shall I do now?

*Vas*.—Why thus lost in thought, something must be devised.

*Vats*.—But what?

*Sāg*.—(Behind.) 'Twere better far that I should put an end at once to my sufferings and my life: the queen will then know nothing of my purpose, and *Susangatā* and I shall both escape disgrace. 'This tree will do.

*Vats*.—I see nothing left for it but to appease the queen. Come, let us go in.

*Vas*.—Stop, I heard steps! perhaps she has thought better and returns.

*Vats.*—She is a woman of a generous spirit—it may be so. Quick, ascertain!

*Ság.*—With the fibres of the *mádhaví* I will suspend myself to this bough. Alas! my dear friends, far, far away, alone and unfriended, I thus terminate my miserable existence. (Fastening the noose around her neck.)

*Vas.*—Who is there?—Ha, the queen! Hey why, what! haste, haste, my friend, or *Vásavadattá* will destroy herself.

*Vats.*—(Advancing hastily.) Where, where is she?

*Vas.*—Behold!

*Vats.*—(Rushing to her and tearing off the tendril.) Intemperate woman! what horrid act is this! my own life trembles in my throat: existence is not yours to abandon: forego such desperate thought.

*Ság.*—(Apart.) My lord! His presence inspires the love of life; at least my last wish is accomplished, and having seen him, I shall die content. (Aloud.) Let me go, Sir, you forget my dependent station; I may not find again an opportunity to end this hated being. Beware how you displease the queen.

*Vats.*—Can it be, my own *Ságariká*! No more of this despair; away with these fatal bands, and to arrest my fleeting life, twine round my neck the noose of these dear arms. (Embraces her.) My friend, it rains without a cloud.

*Vas.*—Very true, if the queen does not return like a sudden squall and spoil our fine weather.

Enter *Vásavadattá* and *Kánchanamálá*.

*Vásava.*—I treated my lord too disrespectfully, girl, as he condescended to cast himself at my feet; I must therefore see him again, and behave to him with more temper.

*Kánch.*—Who would think in this way but your grace? However, better the king fail in decorum than your majesty, so let us seek him.

*Vats.*—Say, fair maid, may not our affection hope to be returned?

*Kánch.*—I hear his majesty's voice, he is probably seeking for you in hopes to pacify your anger.

*Vásara*.—Let us approach gently from behind; I will cast my arms round his neck and tell him I forgive him.

*Vas*.—Take courage, *Ságariká*, make my friend a reply.

*Vásara*.—(Apart.) *Ságariká* here!—keep back, let us listen; I will presently be of the party.

*Ság*.—Why, Sir, will you thus pretend regard you do not feel, and wantonly risk the displeasure of the queen, who, I know, is dearer to you than your life?

*Vats*.—You utter what is not quite true, my love. When her bosom swells with sighs I express concern; when she is sullen I soothe her; when her brows are bent, and her face is distorted with anger, I fall prostrate at her feet. These marks of respect are due to the queen's exalted station; but the regard that springs from vehement affection, that is yours alone.

*Vásara*.—(Coming forward.) I believe you, my lord, I believe you.

*Vats*.—How now, madam, is it you? Why then, you need not be offended. Cannot you perceive that I have been attracted hither, and misled by this resemblance of your dress and person? Be composed, I beg you. (Falls at her feet.)

*Vásara*.—Rise, rise! let not my exalted station put you to such unnecessary inconvenience.

*Vats*.—(Aside.) She has overheard me—there is no chance, then, of appeasing her.

*Vas*.—It is very true, madam. I assure you, that deceived by the belief that you were attempting to destroy yourself, I brought my friend to this spot, to preserve, as I thought, your life. If you doubt me, see this noose. (Takes up the noose.)

*Vásara*.—*Kánchanamálá*, girl, take the twisted tendril and secure that Brahman, and make this hussy go on before us.

*Kánch*.—As you command. (Puts the noose over *Vasantaka*'s neck and beats him with the other end of it.) Now, Sir, see what is the consequence of your ingenuity. You have had the queen's harsh voice grating in your ears, have you? do you recollect this. Come, *Ságariká*, do you go on before.

*Ság*.—Why did I not perish when I sought to die!

*Vas.*—Think of me, my dear friend, who am thus carried off an unfortunate captive by the queen.

(Exeunt all but Vatsa.)

*Vats.*—What an unlucky business this is! What is to be done? how shall I dissipate the rage that clouds the smiling countenance of the queen! how rescue Sāgarikā from the dread of her resentment, or liberate my friend Vasantaka? I am quite bewildered with these events, and can no longer command my ideas.—At any rate, it is useless to stay here: I will in and endeavor to pacify Vāsavadattā. (Exit.)

#### ACT IV.

##### A CHAMBER.

Enter Susangatā, with a diamond necklace in her hand.

*Susangatā.*—Alas, alas! my dear friend Sāgarikā, my timid, my tender, my generous friend: whither, lovely maiden, are you gone? shall I not again behold you? Pitiless destiny, why shouldst thou have endowed her with such unrivalled charms, to consign her to so hapless a fate! Despairing of her life, she has begged me to give this necklace to some Brahman. Whom shall I present it to? Eh, here comes Vasantaka, I will give it to him.

Enter Vasantaka.

*Vasantaka.*—So, I am well out of the scrape. Appeased by my excellent friend's intercession, her majesty has not only restored me to freedom, but has regaled me with cates from her own fair hands, and presented me with a dress and these earrings. Now then to seek the king.

*Sus.*—(Advances.) Worthy Vasantaka, one moment.

*Vas.*—Hey, Susangatā, what's the matter; why do you weep? no bad news, I hope, of Sāgarikā?

*Sus.*—It is of her I wished to speak. It is said that the queen ordered her off to Ujayin, and she was taken away at midnight; but whither she is gone I know not.

*Vas.*—Alas, poor Sāgarikā, a damsel of such unequalled

charms, and of such a gentle disposition! I much fear the violence of the queen.

*Sus.*—She herself despaired of life, poor girl, and left with me this diamond necklace, to be presented to the worthy Vasantaka. Pray you, accept it.

*Vas.*—(Covering his ears.) Excuse me, I could not stretch out my hand to take so sad a memorial. (Weeps.)

*Sus.*—For her sake, let me entreat you.

*Vas.*—I tell you what: I will take it to the king. It will relieve the sorrow into which the loss of Sāgarikā has plunged him. (Susangatā gives it to him, he looks at it attentively.) Why, where could she have procured such a valuable necklace?

*Sus.*—That excited my curiosity, and I asked her.

*Vas.*—And what replied she?

*Sus.*—She looked me in the face, and sighed, and said, Ah, Susangatā, it is now of no avail to tell my sad story—and then burst into tears.

*Vas.*—Although she has not confessed it, yet such an ornament is a proof that she belongs to some distinguished family.—Where is the king?

*Sus.*—He went from the queen's apartments to the crystal alcove. Do you go to him—I must to her majesty. (Exeunt severally.)

#### THE CRYSTAL ALCOVE.

(Vatsa discovered, seated.)

*Vatsa.*—Deceitful vows, tender speeches, plausible excuses and prostrate supplications had less effect upon the queen's anger than her own tears; like water upon fire, they quenched the blaze of her indignation. I am now only anxious for Sāgarikā. Her form, as delicate as the petal of the lotus, dissolving in the breath of inexperienced passion, has found a passage through the channels by which love penetrates, and is lodged deep in my heart. The friend to whom I could confide my secret sorrows is the prisoner of the queen; in whose presence can I now give vent to my tears?

Enter Vasantaka.

*Vas.*—Yonder is my friend, emaciate with care, but graceful still, radiant as the newly-risen moon. Health to your grace, fortune favors you. I have got out of her majesty's clutches, and these eyes have again the pleasure of beholding you.

*Vats.*—My friend Vasantaka, embrace me. (Embraces him.) Your dress declares you restored to the good graces of the queen. Tell me, what news of Sagariká. (Vasantaka hangs down his head.) I pray you speak.

*Vas.*—I cannot utter such unpleasant tidings.

*Vats.*—What tidings, speak? Alas, it is too plain, she is no more! Sagariká! (Faints.)

*Vas.*—(Alarmed.) My friend, revive—revive!

*Vats.*—(Recovering.) Leave me, existence—I willingly resign you—haste, or you will be forcibly expelled. Already is that graceful maid far off.

*Vas.*—You are alarmed unnecessarily. I was about to tell you, the queen has sent her to Ougein;—this I called unpleasant tidings.

*Vats.*—To Ougein! Ah, cruel Vāsavadattá. Who told you this?

*Vas.*—Susangatá:—and more, she gave me this necklace to bring to your majesty. She knows why.

*Vats.*—To alleviate my despair; what else. Give it me. (Vasantaka gives him the necklace, which he applies to his heart.) This has once hung upon her neck, and is now far removed from her: it is a friend that shares a similar fortune with myself, and will speak comfort to my sorrows: wear it, my friend, that as it meets my gaze I may acquire fortitude.

*Vas.*—As you command. (Ties the necklace round his neck.)

*Vats.*—Alas, I shall never again behold my love.

*Vas.*—Speak not so loud—some one approaches.

Enter Vasundhará a female attendant, with a sword.

*Vasundhará.*—Glory to your majesty!—So please you, the

nephew of Rumanwán, Vijayavermá, desirous of communicating to you some acceptable tidings, is at the door.

Vats.—Let him enter.

Vasundhará goes out and returns with Vijayavermá.

Vijayavermá.—Glory to your majesty! Your majesty's fortune is propitious in the triumphs of Rumanwán.

Vats.—Are the Kosalás subdued?

Vij.—By your majesty's auspices.

Vats.—Rumanwán has well performed his task, and speedily achieved an arduous labor. Let me hear the circumstances of our triumph.

Vij.—On receiving your majesty's commands, the general of the state, Rumanwán, soon collected a mighty army of foot, and horse, and elephants, and marching against the king of Kosalá, surrounded him in a strong position in the Vindhya mountains.

Vats.—Proceed.

Vij.—Impatient of the blockade, the Kosalá monarch prepared his troops for an engagement.

Vats.—Your slowness sets my heart in a flutter.

Vij.—Issuing from the heights, the enemy's forces came down upon us in great numbers, and the points of the horizon were crowded with the array of mighty elephants, like another chain of mountains: they bore down our infantry beneath their ponderous masses: those who escaped the shock were transpierced by innumerable arrows, and the enemy flattered himself he had for once disappointed our commander's hopes. Fire flashed from the blows of contending heroes, helmets and heads were cloven in twain—the broken armor and scattered weapons were carried away in torrents of blood, and the defiance of the king of Kosalá, in the van of his army, was heard by our warriors; when——

Vats.—How! was our force discomfited?

Vij.—Our chief alone confronted him, and slew the monarch on his furious elephant with countless shafts.

Vats.—Victory! victory! we have triumphed!

*Vats.*—And honor to our gallant foe, the king of Kosalá; for glorious is the warrior's death when his enemies applaud his prowess. What next?

*Vij.*—Rumanwán then appointed my elder brother, Sanjayavermá, to govern the country of Kosalá, and making slow marches in consequence of the number of his wounded, returned to the capital. He is now arrived.

*Vats.*—Vasundhará, go apprise Yaugandharáyana to distribute the treasures of my favor.

*Vasund.*—You are obeyed. (Exit with Vijayavermá.)

Enter Kánchanamálá.

*Kánchanamálá.*—Glory to your grace! The queen sends you word that Samvarana Siddha, the magician, is arrived from Ougein: will your majesty be pleased to see him?

*Vats.*—By all means; I take much pleasure in this cunning—bring him hither. (*Kánchanamálá* goes, and returns with the magician, Samvarana Siddha, carrying a bunch of peacock's feathers in his hands.)

*Kánch.*—Here is the king.

*Samvarana.*—(Waving the feathers and laughing.) Reverence to Indra, who lends our art his name, and on whom Samvara and Vivara attend! What are your majesty's commands: would you see the moon brought down upon earth, a mountain in mid-air, a fire in the ocean or night at noon? I will produce them—command.

*Vas.*—My good friend, be careful,—take heed what sort of a person this conjurer may be.

*Sam.*—What need of many words? By the force of my master's spells I will place before your eyes the person whom in your heart you are most anxious to behold.

*Vats.*—Go, girl, to the queen, and tell her that as the magician is her servant, I do not wish to witness his performances alone, but will see them in her company.

*Kánch.*—She is here.

Enter Vásavadattá.

*Vásavadattá.*—(Apart to *Kánchanamálá*.) Girl, this man is from Ougein: think you he is a friend to me?



*Kāñch.*—Fear not, madam, he is well disposed to your grace's family.

*Vāsava.*—(Advances.) Victory to my lord!

*Vats.*—Come, madam, the sage promises much: let us behold his cunning. (Leads her to a seat and sits beside her.) Now, sir, display your power.

*Sam.*—You shall be obeyed. (Waves his plume.) Hari, Hara, Brahmá, chiefs of the gods, and thou their mighty monarch, Indra, with the host of heavenly spirits, Siddhas and Vidyádhara, appear rejoicing and dancing in heavens. (The king and queen look up and rise from their seats.)

*Vats.*—Most wonderful.

*Vas.*—Extraordinary, indeed!

*Vāsava.*—Most strange!

*Vas.*—See, love: that is Brahmá throned upon the lotus.—That, Sankara with the crescent moon, his glittering crest—that, Hari, the destroyer of the human race, in whose four hands the bow, the sword, the mace, and the shell are borne.—There, mounted on his stately elephant, appears the king of Swerga: around them countless spirits dance merrily in mid-air, sporting with the lovely nymphs of heaven, whose anklets ring responsive to the measure.

*Vāsava.*—It is very marvelous.

*Vas.*—(Apart.) The son of a slave—this conjurer!—what do we want with gods and nymphs—if he would treat us with a pleasant sight, let him show us Sagariká.

Enter Vasundhará.

*Vasund.*—So please your majesty, the minister Yaugandharáyana begs to inform you that the king Vikramabáhu has sent you, along with your messenger who returns, the counsellor Vasubhúti; be pleased to receive him, as the season is auspicious. Yaugandharáyana will also wait upon you as soon as he is at leisure.

*Vāsava.*—Suspend this spectacle, my lord. Vasubhúti is a man of elevated rank: he is also of the family of my maternal uncle, and should not be suffered to wait: let us first see him.

*Vats.*—Learned sir, be pleased to repose awhile.

*Sam.*—(Waves the brush.) I obey. (Going.) But we have yet some sights for your majesty to behold.

*Vats.*—We will see them.

*Vāsava.*—Make him a present, Kānchanamālā.

*Kānch.*—I shall, madam. (Exit with the magician.)

*Vats.*—(To Vasantaka.) Go and conduct Vasubhūti hither.

(Retires with the queen: Vasantaka goes out, and returns with Vasubhūti and Bābhavya.)

*Vas.*—This way.

*Vasubhūti.*—The avenues of this palace do in truth present a splendid scene. The eye is bewildered amongst the stately steeds and mighty elephants of war: the ear is regaled with harmonious sounds, and the heart is gratified by mixing with the throng of attending princes. The state of the king of Sinhalā is here effaced, and the magnificence of the entrance into every court betrays me into rustic admiration.

*Bābhavya.*—The idea of seeing my master again after so long an absence diverts my thought from every other object. Age and agitation together make my limbs tremble, my eyes are dimmed with involuntary tears, and I stutter and stumble in my speech.

*Vas.*—(In advance of them.) Come on, sirs.

*Vasu.*—(Observing the necklace.) Bābhavya, we should know that necklace: it was presented by the king to his daughter on her departure.

*Bābh.*—It is very like—shall I ask Vasantaka where he got it?

*Vasu.*—No, no; it is not very surprising that princely families should possess jewels of a similar appearance.

*Vas.*—The king,—advance.

*Vasu.*—Victory to your majesty!

*Vats.*—I pay you reverence.

*Vasu.*—Prosperity ever attend your highness!

*Vats.*—A seat for the minister.

*Vas.*—This is a seat. (Spreads his upper garment on the floor.)

*Bábh.*—Bábhavya pays his respects to your majesty.

*Vats.*—(Puts his hand on his shoulder.) Bábhavya, sit here.

*Vas.*—Minister, the Queen Vāsavadattā.

*Vāsava.*—I salute your excellency.

*Vasu.*—May your highness have a son like his father!

*Bábh.*—Madam, Bábhavya bows to you.

*Vats.*—Now, Vasubhúti, how is it with the sovereign of Sinhalá?

*Vasu.*—(Sighs.) I know not what reply to offer.

*Vāsava.*—(Apart.) Alas! what can he have to communicate?

*Vats.*—What is the meaning of this concern?

*Bábh.*—(Apart to Vasubhúti.) It is useless to hesitate—say at once what must be said.

*Vasu.*—It is with difficulty, sir, that I can relate what has chanced, but thus it is. In consequence of the prophecy of the seer that whoever should wed Retnávalí, my master's daughter, should become the emperor of the world, your majesty's minister, as you are aware, solicited her for your bride unwilling, however, to be instrumental to the uneasiness of Vāsavadattā, the king of Sinhalá declined compliance with his suit.

*Vats.*—(Apart to Vāsavadattā.) What strange untruths are these, my love, your uncle's envoy relates!

*Vāsava.*—I cannot pretend to judge, my lord, who is to be believed here.

*Vas.*—(To Vashubhúti.) Well, and where is the princess now?

*Vasu.*—My master, understanding at last that the queen was deceased, consented to give his daughter to Vatsa. We were deputed to conduct her hither, when, alas, our vessel was wrecked, and—(weeps).

*Vāsava.*—Alas, unhappy that I am! Loved sister Retnávalí, where art thou, hear me and reply.

*Vats.*—Be composed: the fate that causes may remove our

sorrows. Have not these escaped? (Pointing to Vasubhúti and Bábhavya.)

*Vásava*.—Oh, that it may prove so, but fate is no friend to me.

(*Behind*.)—The inner apartments are on fire. The flames spread over the palace top a roof of gold; they wind around with clouds of smoke; they shed intolerable heat, and fill the female train with affright. Alas! the former false report that at Lāvanaka the queen was burnt will now become a pitiable truth.

*Vats*.—(Starting up wildly.) *Vásavadattá* burnt to death! my queen, my love!

*Vásava*.—What extravagance is this—behold me at your side. But ah! help, help, my lord.

*Vats*.—(Embracing her.) Be calm, my love.

*Vásava*.—I think not of myself, but poor *Ságariká*. She is in bonds: my cruelty has kept her captive, and she will be lost without some aid—haste, haste, and save her!

*Vats*.—*Ságariká* in peril! I fly to her rescue.

*Vasu*.—What desperate purpose is this, Sir? the fatal folly of the moth.

*Bábh*.—Hear *Vasubhúti*, Sir.

*Vas*.—(Catching hold of his robe.) Forbear! this is madness.

*Vats*.—Let me go, fool! *Ságariká* will perish—think you I shall survive her?

*Bábh*.—What! shall the race of *Bharata* be imperilled for such trifling cause? But be that as it may, I will do my duty.

*Vats*.—Stop, thou devouring flame! withhold thy veiling smoke, as high in air thy circling brilliancy revolves—behold! I come to share the destiny of *Ságariká*. The fire nears the prison of the maid—I shall the more quickly discover her. (Rushes off.)

*Vásava*.—My inconsiderate speech has inflicted this anguish on my lord. I cannot bear his loss, and will follow.

*Vas*.—Wait, madam, I will lead the way. (Exit with the queen.)

*Vasu.*—Vatsa has precipitated himself into the flames. After having witnessed the fate of the princess, what remains but that I also offer up my life. (Exit.)

*Bábh.*—And must the race of Bharata thus causelessly perish?—But why do I delay—I will at least give proof of my fidelity. (Exit.)

THE PALACE ON FIRE.

*Ságariká*, in chains, discovered.

*Ságariká.*—The blaze encompasses me on every side: thanks, lord of flame, thou puttest a period to my sorrows.

Enter *Vatsa*.

*Vats.*—The light shows me *Ságariká*—'tis she, alone, without assistance.

*Ság.*—The prince! The sight of him inspires with me the hope of life. (Aloud.) Preserve me, Sire!

*Vats.*—Fear not: support one moment these investing vapors—ha! the scarf on your bosom is on fire. (Snatches it off.) Your fetters impede your path,—let me support you. Dearest, cling to me. (Takes her in his arms.) Already is the heat allayed,—be of good cheer: the fire cannot harm thee, love, whose very touch abates its intensity. (Pauses—looks round—closes his eyes and reopens them.) Why, what is this! where are the flames! they have disappeared, and there stands the palace unharmed! Ha! the daughter of *Avanti's* monarch!

Enter *Vásavadattá*, who runs into *Vatsa's* arms.

*Vásava.*—My dearest lord!

Enter *Vasubhúti*, *Vasantaka* and *Bábhavya*.

*Vats.*—My friends!

*Vasu.*—Fate is propitious to your majesty.

*Vats.*—This must have been a dream, or is it magic!

*Vas.*—The latter, no doubt: did not that conjuring son of a slave say he had still something for your majesty to see?

*Vats.*—(To the queen.) Here, madam, is *Ságariká*, rescued in obedience to your commands.

*Vásava.*—(Smiling.) I am sensible of your obedience, my lord.

*Vasu.*—(To *Bábhavya*.) That damsel is wonderfully like the princess.

*Bábh.*—So it struck me.

*Vasu.*—Excuse me, Sire, permit me, ask—whence is this maiden?

*Vats.*—You must ask the queen.

*Vasu.*—(To *Vásavadattá*.) Will your grace inform me?

*Vásava.*—*Yaugandharáyana* presented her to me, and told me she had been rescued from the sea: 'twas hence we designated her the Ocean Maid.

*Vats.*—(Apart.) Presented by *Yaugandharáyana*, and without mentioning it to me—what could have been his motive?

*Vasu.*—(Apart to *Bábhavya*.) The likeness—the necklace—the recovery of the damsel from the sea—leave no doubt that this is the daughter of the king of *Sinhalá*, *Retnávalí*. (Advances to her.) Lady *Retnávalí*, do I find you in this condition?

*Ság.*—(Looking at him.) Ha! the minister *Vasubhúti*!

*Vasu.*—I die! (Faints.)

*Ság.*—Unfortunate that I am, I perish: my beloved parents, hear me; reply to your child. (Faints.)

*Vásava.*—What! *Bábhavya*, is this my sister, *Retnávalí*?

*Bábh.*—It is.

*Vásava.*—Revive, dear sister, revive.

*Vats.*—Is this the daughter of *Vikramabáhu*, of the house of *Udatta*, the sovereign of *Sinhalá*?

*Vas.*—(Apart.) I knew this necklace was the property of no ordinary person.

*Vasu.*—(Recovering.) Revive, dear lady,—be composed; see how your elder sister grieves! Console her sorrows with your embrace.

*Retnávalí* (or *Ságariká*).—I have offended the queen, how shall I look her in the face again!

*Vásava*.—Come hither, unrelenting girl—behold in me a sister! come to my arms. (As Retnávalf goes to embrace the queen, she stumbles. *Vásavadattá* apart to *Vatsa*.) My good lord, I blush for my cruelty. Quick! undo these horrible bonds.

*Vats*.—Be composed, I will remove them. (Takes the chains off Retnávalf's feet.)

*Vas*.—*Yaugandharayána* is most to blame for this; he must have known the truth, and yet said not a syllable to any one.

Enter *Yaugandharayána*.

*Yaugandharayána*.—The temporary absence of her husband and the contraction of marriage bonds with another wife cannot fail to be displeasing to the queen: she may thank me for these favors, and I am ashamed to face her. Yet I am confident she will forgive me, when she considers my motives, and will be well pleased that the king obtains by these means the sovereignty of the world. However, happen what may, duty to a master must be performed without regard to such considerations.—They are here: I will approach.—Glory to the king! Pardon me, Sire, if I have accomplished any object affecting your interest without previously consulting you.

*Vats*.—What have you done, inform us?

*Yaugan*.—Please your majesty to be seated and I will tell you. It was formerly announced to us by the holy Seer that the husband of the princess of *Sinhalá* should become the emperor of the world: we therefore earnestly applied to her father to give her hand to our sovereign; but, unwilling to be the cause of uneasiness to the queen, the monarch of *Sinhalá* declined compliance with our request: we therefore raised a report that *Vásavadattá* had perished by a fire at *Lavanaka*, and *Bábhavya* was dispatched with the news to the court of *Sinhalá*.

*Vats*.—I have heard what ensued. But why place the princess with the queen in so unsuitable a station?

*Vas*.—I can guess his object; he expected you would see her in the inner apartments, and take pleasure in her sight.

*Vats*.—Has *Vasantaka* stated your purpose correctly?

*Yaugan*.—Your majesty has said,

*Vats.*—I suppose, too, you had some concern in the appearance of the conjurer?

*Yaugan.*—What other means remained of restoring the damsel to your presence, or how else was Vasubhūti to have seen and recognized the princess?

*Vats.*—(To Vāsavadattā, laughing.) Well, madam, it remains with you to say how we shall dispose of the sister you have acknowledged.

*Vāsava.*—My lord, you might as well speak out, and say, make Retnāvalī over to me?

*Vas.*—Your majesty very accurately conceives the minister's design.

*Vāsava.*—Come, here, Retnāvalī, appear as becomes my sister. (Puts on her her own jewels, then takes her by the hand and presents her to Vatsa.) Accept Retnāvalī, my lord.

*Vats.*—(Taking her hand.) Who would not prize the favors of the queen?

*Vāsava.*—And remember, my lord, she is far away from her natural relations; so treat her, therefore, that she may never have occasion to regret them.

*Vats.*—I shall obey.

*Vas.*—Victory to your majesty! The world is now in the possession of my friend.

*Vasu.*—Princess, pay respectful reverence to Vāsavadattā. (Retnāvalī bows.) Madam, you justly possess the title of queen.

*Vāsava.*—(Embracing Retnāvalī.) Glory to your majesty.

*Vats.*—My cares are all rewarded.

*Yaugan.*—What else can we perform to gratify your highness?

*Vats.*—What more is necessary? Vikramabāhu is my kinsman. Sāgarikā, the essence of the world, the source of universal victory, is mine, and Vāsavadattā rejoices to obtain a sister. This be also my prayer: may Indra with seasonable showers render the earth bountiful of grain; may the presiding Brahmans secure the favor of the gods by acceptable sacrifices.



In connection with Hindoo literature, slight mention may here be made of that of Siam, as to which country the earliest record extends no further back than the fourteenth century, when was founded their first national capital, Ayuthia. There is in Siamese characters an abundance of metrical compositions containing legendary tales and romances, which have been closely studied. The subjects are chiefly taken from Hindoo epics, as in the case of the *Ramayana*, and occasionally from Malay or Javanese legend. The tendency of Siamese romantic poetry is to describe rather than invent, and there are depictions of scenery and places which are grand and striking, forming the choicest of their poetical conceptions. Their greatest blemish consists of tedious embellishments, with a tendency to gross and indecent allusions, from which few works are free. In miscellaneous literature there is a collection of more than two hundred elegant sayings, and fable is largely represented. The number of law-books is very considerable, treating on disputes, complaints and allegations, debt, marriage, criminal matters, abduction, slavery, inheritance and disputes connected with land. The royal edicts, consisting of thirty-six laws, deal with trial by ordeal of fire and water, laws of the palace, laws of the priesthood, offences against the king, offences against the people and rebellion. The section on slavery has been translated into English and was printed at Bangkok. As a curiosity, may be given an extract from a compendium relating to assaults. "A man who strikes another with a blank book shall be fined as though he had struck him with

his hand, but if the assault is committed with a book of the classics, he shall be fined twice as much as he would have had to pay for assaulting with a stick." In the legal lore of the Siamese, as in their legends and poems, are many other curiosities, of which space forbids further mention. While some of their poems are strongly dramatic in character, they know not the drama in its proper sense, and with their literature we need not further concern ourselves.

# THE MARTYRDOM OF ALI.

FROM THE TAZIEH OR PASSION  
PLAY OF PERSIA.

*(Translated by Col. Sir Lewis Pelly, K.C.B., K.C.S.I.)*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

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*ALI, Caliph.*

*ZAINAB, his Daughter.*

*KULSUM, his Daughter.*

*SPIRIT OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD.*

*THE ANGEL GABRIEL WITH TROOP OF  
ANGELS.*

*THE ASSASSIN, son of Muljam.*

*HASAN, son of Ali.*

*HUSAIN, son of Ali.*

*NA'MAN, the Surgeon.*

*ALI'S SERVANT.*

### Prelude.

The Tazieh, or Passion-Play of Persia, depicting the successive martyrdoms of Ali, Hasan and Husain, is a remarkable combination of religious fervor and dramatic art. The full performance occupies the afternoon and evening of ten successive days. If the success of a drama is to be measured by the effect it produces on the people for whom it is composed, no play has ever surpassed this long-drawn out tragedy. Apart from the oral delivery, it has never been published even in Persia. But Sir Lewis Pelly, who was for many years in the British diplomatic service there, engaged a man who had been a teacher and prompter of actors to collect and dictate all the scenes of this impressive tragedy. There were altogether fifty-two, and of these Sir Lewis Pelly had thirty-seven translated into English.

From this work we have selected the scene depicting the assassination of Mohammed's first convert, his cousin Ali, who had married his favorite daughter Fatimah. Ali, by his devout religious life, as well as his close relationship to the Prophet, should have been Mohammed's successor. But he was thrust aside by more ambitious rivals, who were also relatives. In

spite of his quiet submission, many Moslems refused to acknowledge the others as legitimate rulers. Eventually Ali was made Caliph, but two hostile sects had now been established, and his rule in turn was opposed. War broke out, and a band of fanatics resolved to slay Ali and his new rivals in order to quell the schism. Ali was killed as he was entering the mosque at Cufa, A. D. 660. A magnificent tomb was erected, and to this Meshed Ali pilgrimages were made, and memorial services held.

Ali's eldest son Hasan was chosen Caliph without opposition, but eight years later was poisoned. The religious feud continued, but Husain, the surviving brother, lived in retirement at Mecca. His partisans at Cufa summoned him to take his rightful place as Caliph, and he set out with a small body of relatives. They were stopped on their way and finally destroyed at Kerbela, A. D. 680. This series of quarrels, battles and deaths forms the groundwork of this famous passion-play, which usually opens with the Biblical story of Joseph and his brethren, and passes readily from earth to heaven, while the Prophet Mohammed dominates every scene.

#### THE MARTYRDOM OF ALI.

*Ali.*—(Addressing the Almighty.) O beneficent Creator! Lord of jinns and men! look upon thy humble servant Ali, who seeks continually for thy grace, and boasts of thy loving kindness and protection before the inhabitants of the world. I adjure thee, by those arms of mine which tore the dragon in pieces when I was yet an infant only four months old, and

lay in a cradle, to forgive the sins of my followers, the Shi'ahs, for whom I am greatly concerned, O ineffable Being!

*Kulsum, his daughter.*—(To his sister Zainab.) O thou queen of the palace of faith! thou most respected amongst the family of the Prophet! thou light of the eye of Zahrah, his daughter! may I be a ransom for thee! I intend to invite to my house to-night the king of men, the successor of the Prophet, the pillar of faith, Ali, our father. Tell me, may I be offered unto thee! what dost thou think of that?

*Zainab.*—Dear sister, thou light of my sorrowful eyes, what thou hast already said is quite right in itself. Our father is very kind to us, his afflicted daughters, and sympathizes with us in all our troubles and pains. Most certainly he will accept this thy request; go, then, and state it humbly to his lordship.

*Kul.*—(To Ali.) O light of nature's eye, may I be a ransom for thee! O glory of the inhabitants of the world, may I be a sacrifice for thee! O father, let it please thee to condescend to come to my humble hut this evening and partake of the same meal with me, thy broken-hearted daughter; rest in my eyes for awhile, as it were the light.

*Ali.*—May I be an offering for thy soul, O my chosen daughter! thou pacifier of my heart and light of both my eyes! Return home and prepare what thou hast got; but take care not to be extravagant in God's gifts. In the evening, when I shall have performed my duty to the Lord, I will come to the house of my well-behaved, beautiful-faced daughter, and take my first meal.

*Kul.*—Come to me, O my worthy sister of laudable character; for in a moment or two the glory of our father and his majesty will appear. Have the goodness to help Kulsum, thy favored sister, in preparing a repast agreeable to his blessed palate.

*Zai.*—May I be offered for thee, O my poor laboring sister! May I be a ransom for thee and for thy affecting condition, dear Kulsum. Be not troubled, sister; everything is quite ready for our father, even the bird of ours, if he should require to have it roasted. I am sitting here anxiously awaiting his ar-

rival, to see what time the lord of heaven and earth will arrive.

*Kul.*—(To Ali.) May I be a ransom for thee, O thou enlightener of heaven and earth! Thy poor daughter Zainab is in anxious expectation of thy coming. May it please thee to honor the humble hut of thy helpless, miserable daughter, Kulsum.

*Zai.*—Welcome, O glory of 'Irak and Hijaz! May the souls of Zainab and Kulsum be cast at thy holy feet! Think not that we two are thy dear daughters; God is the witness that we consider ourselves thy slaves. The dust of thy feet is the collyrium of Zainab's eyes. Come, take thy seat, thou king of noble birth; be pleased to pardon Kulsum's boldness for the trouble she has given thee, and condescend to eat what she has humbly set here before thee.

*Ali.*—(To Zainab and Kulsum.) O ye brightness of the eyes of Haidar the warrior! if you wish I should take my meal at this table, remove from it everything except bread and salt, and trouble me not to eat the other things.

*Kul.*—What has happened, O my chosen father, that thou art not inclined to eat anything? Why shouldst thou this very night, when it has pleased thee to honor me, be so much disturbed in thy mind?

*Ali.*—What shall I say, dear child, in answer to thy inquiry? Thy father is going to have an end of his sorrows. Seeing the time of my martyrdom is drawing very near, for this reason I do not feel inclined for any kind of food.

*Zai.*—If it be so, then it is better thou shouldst take a little rest. Come, sleep on in this bed which is spread for thee. The adversity of the journey to Nahrawan has broken thee down. Yea, afflictions of the age have rendered thy body extremely weak.

*Ali.*—(To his two daughters.) O my two afflicted daughters, whose eyes continually shed tears, you must go to bed, too, dear ones, and that this very moment; but mind to awake me early in the morning for prayer.

*Kul.*—(To Zainab.) My poor oppressed sister, may I be a ransom for thee! Come and sleep, O helpless, wretched



creature. Come and sleep, thou reflex of Fatimah, the best among women. May God never lessen thy shadow from our head!

*The Prophet.*—(Appearing to Ali in his dream.) This is a wonderful night; for when its evening shall be changed into morning, Ali's beard shall be stained with the blood of his head. To-night Zainab is sitting quite happy in the company of her father; but to-morrow she will be mourning over the dead body of a parent. Hasan and Husain are happy, but only for to-night; for to-morrow the dust of mourning shall sit on the head of both. O my dear cousin Ali, open thine eyes kindly toward me, before I suffer grievously from separation from thee.

*Ali.*—(In his dream, speaks to the Prophet.) O seal of the prophets of all ages, how unbearable is this separation! My soul has come to my lip owing to my earnest desire to see thee. After thy death, O Prophet of God, the wicked, through envy and hatred, agreed together to oppress me. They tied my hands behind my back, and broke the ribs of the Prophet's daughter, Fatimah. These hardships have made me miserable, and my patience has left me altogether. Graciously call me, O Prophet, to thyself; for thy cousin can no longer live in this world!

*The Pro.*—O Ali! O my sweet soul, awake a little! O Ali! O my former companion, awake a little! Open thine eyes and behold thy cousin, whom thou art desirous to see. Good luck is attending on thee at thy pillow; thou shouldst open thine eyes.

*Ali.*—Peace be on thee, O thou fountain of generosity and beneficence! Thou art welcome; may thy feet be placed on my tearful eyes! How strange it is that thou hast deigned to come and visit me. May my sweet soul become an offering to the earth of thy path! Think not, O Prophet, that I am a dear cousin to thee; I swear by the dust of thy feet that I am but thy slave.

*The Pro.*—On thee be peace, O my successor and cousin! On thee be peace, O thou my companion in all my afflictions and sorrows! Though my abode is now in the delightful garden of Paradise, yet Heaven without thy rosy cheeks is

but a prison to me. I am aware of thy condition, knowing well that since my death thou hast been tyrannized over by my cruel people. My heart is full of grief and sorrow on thy account; I cannot lift up my head before thee, nor open my eyes in thy presence, I am so much ashamed.

*Ali.*—O cousin, thy people, after thou wert gone, had no regard for thee. A certain dog stretched forth the hand of cruelty and injustice, and made a breach in thy house. He disregarded my nobility and merits, and took the Khalifat from me by force. He aimed at Ali's disgrace, in that he put a rope round my neck. He burned the door of thy house with fire, and in so doing grieved the holy children.

*The Pro.*—O Ali! Ali! I am undone! Complain no more, for I cannot bear to hear it. I am consuming away as a burning candle by reason of thy sad condition; I am terribly concerned on thy behalf. O Ali, I swear by the Lord, the Creator, the mighty God, that I am heartily weary of such people, who have not regarded nor honored thee. By the Lord, I am an enemy of such a nation. Be not sorry; I will advocate thy cause in the Day of Judgment.

*Ali.*—When thy feet, O Prophet, trod the threshold of Paradise, how shall I say what injustice and cruelty I afterward suffered? The burden of separation from thee has weighed so heavily on my heart as to make my groans reach the heaven of heavens.

*The Pro.*—Be not troubled any more, dear cousin, seeing that the end of our separation is near at hand; the dark night of sorrow is about to be followed by bright, pleasant morning. Sigh no more so deeply, nor shed tears so plentifully; the day of affliction draws to its close, and thy pain will obtain a cure.

*Ali.*—Say, O Prophet, who will help me in the matter? How long must I remain confined in this prison? At what time shall I be delivered from this despicable world and its vain toils? When shall I have the honor of being in thy company in heaven?

*The Pro.*—Be not impatient, for the day of separation is far spent; blessed fortune is going to appear. Thou hast but a brief time to sojourn in this perishable abode. My most wicked people, not regarding me at all, whilst thou art praying

shall smite thee on the head with a sword. This very night thy moon-like face shall be encompassed with a halo of blood. And shortly after thou shalt be with the Prophet, and in Paradise shalt enjoy the companionship of my child and virgin.

*Ali.*—This good news, O cousin, deserves that by reason thereof I should instantly cast my head at thy feet. Oh! I shall be delivered at once from many troubles and sorrows when I shall have closed my eyes forever on the things of this mortal life.

*The Pro.*—Sleep on, dear cousin, in thy bed, having laid thy head for awhile on my lap; for this is thy last slumber in the world, death having already laid wait for thee.

*Ali.*—(Awaking.) I was just now in the presence of Muhammad, the Prophet. Why was his glorious light removed suddenly from my sight? O Messenger of God, why didst thou not take me with thee on thy departure? Why should I continue in affliction and sorrow any longer?

*Zai.*—Again I hear my father's sad voice. I am much disturbed by the groanings of my parent to-night. O Lord God, what may be the cause of all this sighing and crying? The piteous cries of my father have made my soul reach the tip of my lip.

*Ali.*—This night has become almost a year in regard to length! Methinks the morning cocks have become dumb or the king of light must have trampled under foot the army of darkness.

*Zai.*—Oh! why does my father complain so much to-night in his bed? What has made him noisy like a ringing bell? O Lord, what shall I do to my poor father to keep him quiet? My heart is beating within me owing to his sad voice.

*Ali.*—O night, art thou not to be followed by happy morning? Why art thou unaware of my miserable condition? O sun, put forth thy face from behind the curtain. All is fully determined upon resignation and acquiescence.

*Zai.*—Oh! why does not my father sleep to-night? Why does he grieve my heart so much by his mournful utterings? He has nothing on his tongue but words of separation to-night. I fear the stone of his sorrow will one day break my wings.

*Ali.*—Show forth thyself, O sun, out of the bosom of the east, and be not sorry for Haidar's death. Shine on the surface of the dark world and make it bright, and care not so much about my murder.

*Zai.*—To-night my father's complaints are very bitter, his eyes tearful, and his face pallid. Why does he complain of the length of night? It would appear—God forbid!—he has some pain.

*Ali.*—Come out, O morning, from the bosom of the east, and be not sad owing to Haidar's murder. It is decreed that before dawn my head shall be cloven asunder with the stroke of a scymetar, and my moon-like face be washed with my own blood. But let God's will be done; it is for the Shi'ahs that I suffer all this.

*Zai.*—(Addressing *Ali.*) May I be a sacrifice for thee, O my chosen father! May my soul be a ransom for thee, O thou brightness of my two eyes! O thou heaven of glory, what has happened to thee that thou art so sad? Oh! tell me, thy poor daughter, why now thou lookest toward the earth, now toward heaven. At one moment thou sheddest tears down thy cheeks, at another thou bowest down and fallest prostrate on the ground.

*Ali.*—May I be a ransom for thee, my poor, sore-hearted daughter! In a few short hours I intend to have a journey to Paradise. The chosen one of the glorious God appeared to me in a dream and invited me to his happy banquet. The time has come that my beard shall be stained with my own blood by the cruel sword of the son of Muljam, the accursed wicked dog.

*Zai.*—May God never decree this, dear father! May I be offered unto thee! Never can people act so cruelly toward us! Thou art the asylum of the poor, the ointment of the wounded in heart. Why shouldst thou conceive a bad omen against thyself, dear father?

*Ali.*—Shed not tears down thy poor cheeks, O my daughter; grieve me not in so doing, dear child. Get me some water soon, that I may renew my ablutions, for the time of prayer is come; the dawn has appeared on the horizon.

*Zai.*—(Bringing water.) Come, here is water for the re-

newal of thy ablutions. Perform the ceremonies, thou Lion of the glorious Creator! Make thy ablutions. May the God of the world be thy refuge! May my midnight prayers direct thee in the right way!

*Ali.*—(Making his ablutions.) O great God, for the merits of Muhammad the Arabian, the king of thy prophets, the director of the right way, for this head of mine which shall be cloven asunder with the sword of tyranny, and for the sake of my body, which shall roll to-morrow in its own blood, forgive thou mercifully the sins of my Shi'ahs, and in the Day of Judgment pardon thou all them that love me. I am going now to the Mosque to perform my prayers and serve my Creator with supplication and intercession.

*Zai.*—O father, I most humbly entreat thee not to go to Mosque. Remain at home and perform God's service here.

*Ali.*—How can I forbear going to the Mosque, to serve there the Lord of all creatures? Whatever happens by God's decrees I cannot, dear child, but assent thereto.

*Zai.*—Order, then, O honorable father, please, my brothers Hasan and Husain to accompany thee whither thou goest, that they may defend thee, if necessary, from the mischief of the enemy during the hours of prayer.

*Ali.*—(About to depart.) Dear daughter, light of my tearful eyes, how can I take them with me? It is decreed, dear child, that my beard should be stained with the blood of my head in the Mosque, and I cannot avert it.

*Zai.*—May I be offered for thy elegant stature, O father! come, let me show my readiness to die for thee. How can I soothe the pain of separation from thee? How can I bear the hard calamity of being an orphan? If a thorn happens to prick thy foot unawares, I would rather have it in my eye than see it hurt thy foot.

*Ali.*—(To his water-fowls.) O ye water-fowls, why are you all so sad, and why put ye your heads under your wings mournfully? You seem to lament the death of some honorable creature—nay, by our Lord, ye are mourning for me!

*Zai.*—(To Ali.) May I be a ransom for thee, O thou central orb of the constellation of truth! pray tell me what art thou saying to the water-fowl? Why are they holding the skirts of

thy garment with their bills, and making such a sad noise at this time? They are all running round thee, and saying, "Ali, Ali!" They are encompassing thee around as holy pilgrims, hoping by thee to be made happy.

*Ali*.—The water-fowls of our house, dear child, are all mourning affectionately for me. It appears they have been informed of my approaching murder, and are, for this reason, holding the skirts of my garment.

*Zai*.—No doubt it is most ominous to keep water-fowls at home. They have, at any rate, brought innumerable evils upon me by their ill-luck. I am much troubled in mind at the ceaseless noise of these creatures, and shall therefore break their wings with stones, and turn them out from the house at once.

*Ali*.—Strike not, dear girl, the water-fowls of the household of faith. Pelt not stones at the nightingales of the garden of lamentation. Break not, dear daughter, the wings of these poor birds, these lapwings of the city of Saba.

*Zai*.—O what shall I do? the murder of my poor father is about to be accomplished, for birds and beasts are mourning for him. We shall, ere long, become fatherless in the world. O Lord God, look mercifully upon us.

*Ali*.—(In the Mosque, proclaiming for prayer.) God is great! God is great! God is great! God is great! I bear witness that there is no other God but God!

*The Cursed Katamah*.—My address is to thee, O son of Muljam the traitor, awake and arise quickly from thy sleep, for Ali has come most pompously to the Mosque. Dost thou not hear his proclamation for prayer? Hold this sword in thy hand, and run soon to the Mosque and kill Ali, if thou lovest me and intendest to make me glad and happy. Deliver me, my dear friend, from the great pain which troubles my heart, and render Fatimah's children fatherless at once. In no other way canst thou please me except in murdering the Prophet's successor. My heart will not rejoice until I see Hasan and Husain putting round their necks the shawl of mourning.

*Ali*.—(Finding the son of Muljam sleeping in the Mosque.) My address is to thee, O Ibn Muljam the traitor, awake thou

for the service of the great Lord! If I would I could put thee to shame by disclosing what thou hast concealed carefully under thy cloak. Arise from thy place, it is time for thee to be cheerful, for it is the night of my decease and the day of thy revelry.

*Gabriel.*—(To the Angels.) Be it known unto you, O ye heavenly hosts, that his lordship Ali, the Lion of God, has gone to the Mosque to pray. The sign of God's mercy has descended in the niche to offer his obedience to his Maker. Let us go down to imitate that high personage and offer our souls to the dust of his holy feet. It being the last prayer of the Lion of God on earth, let us descend once more, to take a lesson from him before we lose the opportunity.

*The Angels.*—Woe unto us! it is the last day of Ali's life! Alas! it is his final prayer! This very hour the sword of Muljam's son, the accursed, shall touch the crown of Ali's head. Whom shall we imitate hereafter in God's worship, seeing the first Imam is going to be killed? Come on, O ye angels, all of you; it is time to bid adieu to the king of true religion.

*The Son of Muljam.*—(Smiting Ali.) For the sake of Katamah, the cursed, treacherous woman, I strike on Ali's head, maliciously, the sword of cruelty!

*Ali.*—(Smitten down.) In the name of God, by his order, and in his way! O religion of the Messenger of God, Muhammad! the blessings of the Lord be on him and his family.

*Angels announce Ali's Death.*—Alas! alas! the high priest of God's religion has been murdered by the sword of the enemy! Alas! alas! the prince of the faithful has been cruelly slain! The successor of the chosen Prophet has been killed with the sword of injustice, and blood has gushed out of the Lion of God's head! Alas! alas!

*Zai.*—(Awaking.) O Lord God! what fire of tumult is flaming without! What news is this which has heaped up sorrows on my heart? Merciful God! what is this commotion among the angels of Heaven! Oh! their sighs and cries are disturbing my mind in a manner I cannot express! Methinks my poor father has suffered martyrdom; if so, Zainab is reduced to the lowest degree of misery.

*Gab.*—Be it known unto you, O ye household of faith, that Ali's spirit has flown like a bird to its heavenly nest in Paradise. A head, whose umbrella was the chapter of the Kur'an, entitled "The Sun," yea, such a glorious head has received from the sword of malice a blow of a nature to cleave it asunder like the bosom of a rosebud. He is like a red lily rolling in his own blood through the stroke of Muljam's son, the cruel unbeliever.

*Zai.*—(To Kulsum.) Woe unto me! What was the voice which reached my ear so suddenly? Is—God forbid!—the Lion of God slain? Come, dear sister, let us go lamentingly to Hasan and Husain's bed-room to awake them.

*Kul.*—(To Hasan.) O Hasan, may Kulsum be offered for thy head! awake thou! Thine enlightened father is slain; awake, dear brother!

*Zai.*—(To Husain.) O brother, thou brightness of my tearful eyes, awake from thy sleep! We have at length become fatherless; dear brother, awake!

*Hasan and Husain.*—Distressed sisters, why are you making such an ado? Wherefore do tears run down your cheeks? Dear sisters, your sighs and groans are burning my very inward soul. What is the cause of this mournful noise?

*Zai.*—Dear brothers, our father went to the Mosque to say his prayers and to bless the people. Now there reach my ears continually the voices of the holy ones of God, saying, "Ali is killed." They seem crying between heaven and earth, and saying plainly, "Ali, the high priest of religion, was killed in the general Mosque." It is better both of you should run to the sacred place and see what is become of our dear father there.

*Has. and Hus.*—Wo unto us! Why is our father wallowing in his blood? Why is the crown of our head fallen in the niche of prayer? Father, may we be offered for thy blood-stained face! May we be sacrificed for thy rose-colored, moon-like visage!

*Ali.*—Welcome, dear sons! do you come at such a time to see your father? The end of my troubles is at hand. The time has come that I should be saved from the miseries of this world, and go to Paradise to visit the Prophet of God.



You may take me home at once from the Mosque; there is no occasion for my miserable family to weep.

*Has. and Hus.*—(Together.) Alas! O our followers, Haidar is slain! The cup-bearer of the tank of Al Kausar is no more! Mourn on, O ye mourners; for thy sons have become orphans!

*Zai.*—(To Ali.) May I be a ransom for thee, O thou lion of the thicket of God's creation! May the soul of Zainab be offered a sacrifice for thine! What cruel, irreligious infidel has smitten thee with the sword on thy holy head? Open thine eyes compassionately on us, for God's sake, and for the afflicted soul of Zainab, thy daughter.

*Ali.*—Be not sorry, dear child, on account of my martyrdom; for so was it decreed as regards me that I should thus be killed. Lamentations and weepings do not avail me at all. Do something, if thou canst, to alleviate awhile my pain.

*Zai.*—(To Hasan and Husain.) O ye two princes, may I be a ransom for your souls! Prepare black cloths for me that I may put them on. The king of the throne of the Imamat is leaving the world forever; make ready for him funeral garments and things pertaining to mourning. I am about to rend my clothes in pieces through excess of sorrow. Oh, what am I to do? My father is going out of my reach so suddenly.

*Kul.*—(To Hasan and Husain.) O ye brightness of the eyes of the age! O ye plants of the rose-garden of Ali, dear Hasan and Husain, behold in what state the pillar of faith, our father is. Run and call for him Na'man, the surgeon, that he may see the wound of the supporter of religion; peradventure he may be able to cure him.

*Has. and Hus.*—(To Na'man.) We beseech thee, for God's sake, O Na'man, to come to our house and see how the Lion of God, the king of men, feels. Look pitifully on the sad state of us, the orphans of the pillar of faith, and treat the wound of Ali, the royal priest.

*Na'man, the Surgeon.*—May I be a ransom for you, ye two tender plants of the Prophet's garden; ye ornaments of the bosom of Muhammad, the Arabian. Be not grieved, O ye Hasan and Husain! I am coming just now to treat Haidar the warrior's wound. Go ye in haste to that king of piety; I am coming after you to see if I can cure him.

*Has.*—(To Zainab.) O dear sister, sadly afflicted with grief by reason of thy father's mortal wound, go on one side, and hide thy face carefully, for a stranger is about to enter. Behold, Na'man is coming to examine the wound of Haidar the brave.

*Na'm.*—O ye chosen family of the Messenger of God, peace be on you! O ye household of the elect of God, peace be on you! Ye tender plants of the rose-garden of religion, drooping from the blast of the tempest of God's decree, peace be on you!

*The Family.*—O thou votary of the law of God's Apostle, on thee be peace! O thou lover of the possessor of the crown and standard, on thee be peace! See, O Na'man, how the blooming garden of faith has suddenly withered through Time's unjust proceedings! Have thou mercy on us poor children, and treat well the mortal wound of the model of piety.

*Kul.*—O surgeon, for the sake of the living God and Judge, see the wound of the head of my father, the cup-bearer of Kausar! Look if his wound be mortal, for I am very anxious for my dear father. If I hear good news from thy mouth, I will go to thy children and show my readiness to bear their painful calamities.

*Zai.*—O Na'man, I adjure thee by the veracity of Muhammad, the chief of God's religion, to pity me, a sad, miserable creature, and to lay my desponding soul under a great obligation to thee, by treating my father. Take me as one of thy slaves bought with money, and pity me. Do it for God's sake, and have compassion on me and these poor children. I am still in mourning for Zahrah, my mother; how can I bear the additional burden of separation from my father?

*Na'm.*—(To Ali.) Peace be unto thee, O glory of heaven and earth! O Imam of the two worlds, and director of the followers of truth! Why is thy face immersed in blood? Why should the phenomenon of the moon's splitting be reproduced in thy forehead? Who has felled the tree of faith to the ground? Who has plunged in blood the pilot of the deluge?

*Ali.*—What shall I say, O Na'man? Alas! when I went to the Mosque, and stood up there for prayer, toward the niche of faith, as soon as I fell prostrate on the ground, the cruel

sword of the traitor alighted on my head whilst thus bowing myself, and cut down as far as my forehead.

*Na'm.*—(Probing the wound.) Alas! let me see what heaven, the supporter of the faithful, has done to the noble cousin of the Prophet? Alas! alas! mayest thou be subverted, O heaven! Mayest thou be plunged in the ocean of blood like the head of the Lion of God! For the pate of Ali, the equal of Aaron, the son of Imran, is cloven asunder, and the unjust blow has reached down to the forehead.

*Has.*—I adjure thee by the living God, O Na'man, to cure the wound of our father, the priest of the age. Let not the two tender plants of Ali be rooted up by overwhelming sorrow, but deliver them from the bonds of desolation, if thou canst.

*Na'm.*—(To the family.) Wash your hands at once of Haidar's life; have no more hope of his recovery. Ali will be but for one hour more with you, his dear ones. O children of the Lion of God, you will ere long become fatherless. Read the Kur'an over your father, for he is gone. Prepare for him winding-sheets, and do not leave him alone. Tell Zainab to put on black and mourn for her father.

*Ali's Family.*—(Crying and lamenting.) Make us not fatherless, O Lord, O God! Shall we be orphans and sorrowful ones, O Lord, O God? Take our souls instead of his, O Lord, O God! Make us not tearful-eyed, O Lord, O God!

*Ali.*—(To his family.) O my poor, sad family, gather ye yourselves together around me, like the constellation of Pleiades about the moon; and you, O brightness of my eyes, Hasan and Husain, come near me for awhile, dear sons; and come thou, Zainab, my daughter, see thy father's face, for the time has arrived that thou shouldst put on black on account of my death.

*Has.*—May I be offered unto thee, O thou glory of the people of the age! I am Hasan, thy poor orphan son. Thou art greatly desirous to go to Paradise, the abode of the just, and hast, therefore, forgotten us altogether.

*Ali.*—O thou tender plant of the garden of Time's glory, thou brightness of my tearful eyes, Hasan, come to me, that I may commit unto thee the secret knowledge of the Imamate,

or priesthood. Come, let me put my lips to thy delicate lips, and deliver the mystery of religion in this way to thy heart. Thou art the guide of men after me, O my successor! Perform the rites of Imamat for the people after my departure.

*Has.*—What shall I, thy oppressed son, do when thou art taken away from us? To whom shall I look hereafter for comfort and solace? May Hasan be offered for thy parched throat, O father! Come, let me put my lips to thine as thou didst order me to do.

*Ali.*—Oh, my poor, helpless, weeping family, leave me alone in the room for awhile; for I have to speak my secrets to my Creator, and make supplication to him, before I leave this world.

*Has.*—O ye, my brothers and sisters, go out all of you from this room, with tearful eyes, and let everyone put a copy of the Kur'an on his head, and pray earnestly to the holy Creator for the recovery of our father and protector.

*Ali.*—O thou beneficent Creator, the sole, the almighty God, I adjure thee by thine own glory, O thou who art without any equal, and by that pearl-like tooth of thy chosen and glorious Prophet, which was knocked out with a stone in the battle of Ohod; and by the disappointment of his child, Fatimah, and by the fracture which she suffered in her side; and by the tearful eyes of his distressed family; and, lastly, by this blood-stained beard of mine, to forgive, O eternal, ineffable Maker, the sins of Ali's followers in the Day of Judgment. Now I depart this life with the desire of meeting the Messenger of God in the next world. I do therefore bear witness that there is no God except God. (Dies.)

*Zai.*—(Perceiving that Ali is dead.) Why has thy mouth ceased from speaking, dear father? Has heaven thrown black dust on our head to make us miserable? Alas! his honor, the Lion of God, has departed this life! He is gone to the garden of Paradise to visit Zahrah! Dear ones, inform Ali's afflicted servant of his master's death, that he may cover Haidar's mule, "Duldul," with black.

*Has. and Hus.*—(Together.) Come, let us put shawls of mourning round our necks. Come, let us groan and make a sad noise. Come, dear sisters, dutifully close our father's eyes.

*Zai. and Kul.*—(Together.) Alas! our father is, after all, gone! Alas! he is gone as an arrow out of our hand! Come, let us put on black; let us dishevel our hair over his corpse.

*Ali's Servant.*—(Leading the mule, "Duldul," draped in black.) Oh! they have killed the owner of "Duldul," Ali, the prince of believers! Alas! they have slain the chief, the Lion of the Lord of all creatures! The master of the crown and standard has suffered martyrdom by the sword of Muljam the traitor! They have destroyed the all-wise successor of the chosen of God.

*Has. and Hus.*—O "Duldul" of our lord, where is our father and thy master? Where is our chief and our prince? Where is our dear supporter and protector? Where is the lustre of the Prophet's religion? Where the husband of Zahrah the virgin? O poor creature, thy master has been killed by the insensate populace.

While the above play deals with heroes and not with divinities, it was to the Persians in the nature of a religious drama, for Ali was considered as almost of divine origin, not only for his devout, religious life, but as the cousin and son-in-law of Mahomet. The Persian poetry of the seventh century was essentially mystic in character, and of this school Firdausi was the prophet. In the *Sháhnáma* Sufic pantheism tends to reconcile philosophy with revealed religion and centres in the universality and absolute unity of God, who is diffused through every particle of the visible and invisible world. To him the human soul, during her temporary exile in the prison-house of the body, strives to get back through successive stages till she is sufficiently purified to be again absorbed in Him. This is hinted at in numerous verses of the Persian *Book of Kings*, in which the poet cries out against the vanity of all earthly joys

and pleasures, and expresses a passionate desire for a better home, for a reunion with the Godhead. The most remarkable passage is that which describes the mysterious disappearance of Shah Kaikhosrau, who suddenly, when at the height of earthly fame and splendor, renounces the world in utter disgust, and carried away by his fervent longing for an abode of everlasting tranquillity, vanishes forever from the midst of his companions. In the *Speeches of Birds*, an allegorical poem interspersed with moral tales and pious contemplations, the final absorption of the Sufi into the Deity is most ingeniously illustrated, and the seven valleys through which the birds travel on their way to the fabulous phœnix, or simurg, are the seven stations of the mystic road that leads from earthly troubles to the much-coveted Nirvana. As a believer in this system we can easily account for the philosophy of Ali, who in the drama is perfectly reconciled to death.

# THE ALCHEMIST.

A PERSIAN COMEDY OF THE PRESENT  
DAY.

BY MIRZA FATH-ALI AND MIRZA JA'AFAR.

*(Translated into English by Guy LeStrange, M.R.A.S.)*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

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MULLĀ IBRĀHĪM KHALĪL, of Kaldak, the  
Alchemist.

MULLĀ HAMĪD, of Sāmuk, his Assistant.

DARVĪSH 'ABBĀS, his Servant.

HĀJĪ KARĪM, the Goldsmith.

AGHĀ ZAMĀN, the Doctor.

MULLĀ SALMĀN, a learned man.

MASHADĪ JABBĀR, the Merchant.

SAFAR BEG, a Landed Proprietor.

SHAIKH SĀLIH, of Khāchmaz.

HĀJĪ NURĪ a Poet.



### Prelude.

This Persian comedy was published at Tehran in 1874 by Mirza Ja'afar. It is really a translation from a Turkish original, written by Mirza Fath-Ali in 1861. It presents a picture of the Mohammedan life of to-day, for the belief in alchemy and astrology is still strong among people of that faith. As regards the titles of the dramatis personæ, it may be noted that Mulla means a Mohammedan preacher; Darvish, a monk; Haji, one who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca; Agha, a captain; Mashadi, a gentleman; Safar, a squire; Shaikh, the chief of a tribe.

### THE ALCHEMIST.

#### ACT I.

The scene is laid at the house of Haji Karim, the Goldsmith. He has invited friends to meet Shaikh Salih, who has lately arrived in the town of Nakh. Haji Nuri, the Poet, who has not been invited, by accident comes in also. The company are seated, dressed in their every-day clothes. Shaikh Salih wears a turban and holds in his hands a long chaplet of beads, which he twirls between his fingers.

*Karim, the Goldsmith.*—Do your worships know why I have invited you here?

*Jabbar, the Merchant.*—No, not at all.

*Kar.*—I have some fresh news to give you. They say that Mulla Ibrahim, of Kaldak, who went to Tiflis to obtain his authorization, has returned and set up his tent in the Khachmaz Hills, where he practices alchemy. For instance, he has pared a substance which they call the elixir, and when he puts a drachm of this into a stone-weight of brass, it turns to pure silver.

*Zaman, the Doctor.*—I, too, have heard of this.

*Kar.*—Shaikh Salih, with his own eyes, saw how the Armenians of Iklis brought in twenty-five thousand stone-weight of copper coin, and received therefor from Mulla Ibrahim Khalil half a ton of silver and carried it away. Is not this so, O Shaikh?

*Salih.*—Yes, truly, by the Kuran which I study! I saw it with my own eyes. And every one who brought Mulla Ibrahim Khalil his coin received and carried off double the weight in ingots of pure silver.

*Beg, the Land-owner.*—Why should not we, too, then go and get some?

*Salman.*—Although I keep no actual cash, yet as I am a friend of Haji Rahim, the money lender—if you are satisfied with a loan for a year at 12 per cent. interest and will give proper security—I can get from him both for you and for myself as much money as we like.

*Jab.*—I, myself, Mulla, have money; but it is all out in business, and it is very difficult to get it back in hand so quickly. So, if it be possible, get me, too, a thousand stone-weight of copper,—I have two shops that I will leave in pledge for it.

*Kar.*—Get another thousand stone, as well, for me. I will give a mortgage on my house.

*Zam.*—And another thousand for me; and my wife's garden shall be the pledge.

*Beg.*—And let him give me, too, a thousand; and let my village stand in pledge to him for it.

*Nuri, the Poet.*—(Suddenly pulling a paper out of his pocket.) Your worships, it's a fine subject, that of the Lezgi Avars, under the leadership of Khan Butai, who came some

sixty years back and ralded Nakhu. I have set it to verse. Now listen while I read it, and you will note how eloquently and rhetorically I have turned it.

*Zam.*—Fie! Haji Nuri! Is this a fit time for declaiming poetry? We assemble to talk and take counsel, and then here comes a man who begins, "I have put into verse the events of sixty years ago—how the Lezgis came and how they went!" What interest has all this for us?

*Nuri.*—(Vexed.) "What interest has it for us?" You will see what misfortunes the Lezgis at that time brought down on your ancestors' heads, and what inhumanities they perpetrated. And is the knowledge of past events of no interest to you?

*Kar.*—(Soothingly.) Now, Haji Nuri, this is not exactly the time for reading poetry; another day, at your leisure, you can read it to us. At present, look here and tell us whether or no you think it advisable this going to Mulla Ibrahim Khalil and this buying of silver. Does not your good sense approve of this business?

*Nuri.*—(Sullenly.) Not at all.

*Salm.*—And for what reason?

*Nuri.*—For this reason, that each one's profession must be for him his own elixir, and his means of livelihood: so what need is there to go running after alchemists? I have not seen Mulla Ibrahim Khalil, but I know by experience that he is just setting up a shop for befooling people. Even though he has been to Tiflis, as 'tis said, who is it that has given him permission to practice alchemy? Who has seen his alchemy? There can be no elixir in this material world. But this Shaikh Saliḥ, who comes from Khachmaz, has bereft you of your wits to such a point that you believe his words, and so will not give credence to anything that I may say.

*Kar.*—But there is proof that a great deal of elixir exists in this material world, and so there is no need of discussing that matter. But just you prove in what way each one's profession is to be his elixir! Why, here I am a goldsmith, and I am unable to make sufficient for my daily expenses!

*Nuri.*—Because you have lost credit with people, and so no one will confide his business to you. In times back, what-

ever gold or silver they brought to you to work up into ornaments, you stole more than half of it, and supplied the place with brass or copper, and so returned it to the owner. At last your tricks were exposed to the light of day, and now nobody brings his business to you. Had you acted honestly, you would assuredly have been a rich man by to-day.

*Zam.*—Well, and why am I without means?

*Nuri.*—Because you have abandoned your proper profession and gone into a business that you know nothing about. Medicine was not your profession. Your father, Ustad Rahman, the barber, by means of his hone and his razor, accumulated a reasonable fortune, which you have spent. The worthy man had, with immense pains, taught you to be a good barber. But you were not content with this. You wanted, after the fashion of the Tiflis barbers, to have a reputation as a doctor. But, after killing a whole graveyard full of men, people have got to understand your method, and now keep away from you. At present you are neither barber nor doctor. How often have I not advised you to go to the Russian doctors, and learn from them the medicines for fever, and leave off giving melon-water as the sole remedy?—but you never will listen.

*Zam.*—(Apologetically.) They told me that the Russian doctors use bread and sol as the remedy for fever. I have inquired of those who know the Russian language as to what sol is. They say "salt." But can salt be the specific against fever?

*Salm.*—(Stopping Zaman's mouth.) For Heaven's sake, don't talk and make an exhibition of your folly. That salt is quite different from this salt. (Turning to Nuri.) According to what you have been saying, Haji Nuri, I at any rate ought to have become a Karun (millionaire). Now, why is it that I only possess a mat and a water-jar?

*Nuri.*—That, too, has its reason. Just because your build would fit you so well to be a muleteer, it has, forsooth, got into your head that your father having been a Mulla, therefore you must be a Mulla, too. Your father had studied, and, having ability, had risen to be a Mulla, but you, who are not capable of writing your own name, even, how can you become a teacher and preacher? Ability is not like the father's fur coat,

which comes down by inheritance to the children. And therefore it is that you are not esteemed among the people. And how should you become rich? Why, if with your strength and your stature you had only taken to being a muleteer, you would barely have been content with gaining your hundred and fifty roubles a year by this time!

*Beg.*—And why am I not rich?

*Nuri.*—You own land, and you should get your wealth by attending to the sowing and the reaping. But you, to your loss, have given yourself up to idle talk, throwing yourself first into this matter and then into that; speaking evil of people behind their backs, and worrying the Government officials with silly petitions about evil-doers and oppressed innocents. At last, having let your pen run riot, you were for three years in the clutches of the law, and then three years more spending great sums of money to get free. So your life has been passed. And now you expect to get rich all of a sudden through this lying alchemist! Just like Mashadi Jabbar there, who, in his excess of cupidity, lent out his petty scrapings to people at an exorbitant interest so as to become a capitalist, all in a minute; but now he would be well content if he could only once more lay his hands on the principal.

*Kar.*—Well, master Poet, even granting that all of us have made mistakes, and have not made full profit each by his trade: still you yourself do not seem to get any very agreeable income from your own profession! If you get your dinner, you go without your breakfast! If you get your breakfast, you go without your dinner! According to what you have said, your talent—which is to make verses—ought to become the great elixir in your case, too?

*Nuri.*—Yes; my talent in truth should be the elixir. But just as you say that, for the elixir you were talking of, it is necessary to have base metal on which it may exert its potency,—even so, in the matter of my talent, it is likewise necessary to find men of taste and culture and understanding, in order that the grandeur of my verses may be appreciated. But seeing that through my evil fortune I find myself in the midst of such fellow-townsmen as you are, without intelligence or culture, and with neither taste nor appreciation, what gain

could there be expected from a talent such as mine? and what can my poetry avail me?

*Kar.*—How he does blunder! What rubbish he talks! Who invited you to come and give advice to all of us here? And look, now, where have you got all this philosophy of yours? Be off outside, for we don't want your advice.

*The other Guests.*—(All together.) Get up and go! We don't need your advice!

*Nuri.*—(Picking up his paper of verses in a hurry and putting it under his arm.) I'm off—words of truth are bitter. (Exit.)

*Kar.*—Well, your worships, we are all agreed. The money must be ready by the beginning of next week, and then we will set off by road to the Khachmaz Hills, and present ourselves before Mulla Ibrahim Khalil.

*The Guests.*—(All together.) Yes, we are all agreed.

## ACT II.

The scene is laid in the Khachmaz Hills. In a level meadow among the foot-hills two tents are pitched. On a lower level stands a four-walled hut of wood, in the interior of which is seen a large forge. Near the forge are the bellows, and all around are lying fractured ingots of brass. In front of one of the tents is a smaller hut. Above, the meadow runs up into the mountains, which are snow-capped. On the further side is seen a valley, and a small river flows through it, on either side of which are oak and hazel trees. On the other side to the meadow a spring gushes from a stony basin and flows down toward the valley. Mulla Ibrahim Khalil occupies one of the tents, and in the other is Mulla Hamid, his assistant. In the smaller hut is his servant, Darvish Abbas, seated amongst the tools and utensils. Mulla Ibrahim Khalil, the alchemist, coming out of his tent, calls toward that of Mulla Hamid. Hamid goes to him and stands respectfully before him.

*Ibrahim.*—Mulla Hamid, according to what Shaikh Salih wrote, ought not those people from Nakhu to arrive here in the afternoon to-day?

*Hamid.*—Yes, master; or even earlier.

*Ibr.*—When these people come, Mulla Hamid, pay them every respect. Make them take a seat in the tent, and inquire after their health. Ask them why they have come, and if they say that they have brought copper coin and want to buy silver, then answer them, "My master gave all the silver of the last melting to the Armenians of Ikliis, and the silver of this next melting, too, which we have now in hand, he has already disposed of to them. Further, it requires a month to complete the preparation of the elixir for this second melting. You have therefore given yourselves the trouble to come quite uselessly, for my master will neither receive the copper money from you nor give you silver in return." And then, if they want to see me, say further to them, "My master is in retirement during three days for meditation, and is now occupied with his prayers; therefore, for three days it is impossible for him to receive people or answer inquiries."

*Ham.*—Why do you tell me to do this, master? If I talk to them in this manner it is very probable that they will take their money and go away with it.

*Ibr.*—You are a wondrous idiot! Are you going to teach me the ways of the people of Nakhu? Why, if you killed them they would not leave this place without having seen me and given me the money; so go and do exactly as I have told you. (He returns to his own tent.)

*Ham.*—(After him.) On my eyes be it, master!

(Time passes, and it is now but two hours to sunset. The people of Nakhu appear, and Mulla Hamid advances to meet them.)

*The Nakhu people.*—Peace be on you!

*Ham.*—The peace be upon you. You are welcome! What delight you give me! Be pleased to take your repose in the tent.

*One of the Nakhu people.*—We were very desirous of seeing

you. Is your health good? Is your nose fat? (This means "Are you well?")

*Ham.*—Praise be to Allah! In such a pleasant, cool spot as this, how could my nose be otherwise than fat? Particularly, too, in the service of such a great man as Mulla Ibrahim Khalil!

*One of the Nak. peo.*—Ah well, one often finds places as pleasant as this; but so great a man as Mulla Ibrahim Khalil one does not come across everywhere! Can we to-day have the honor of visiting his worship?

*Ham.*—Our master has gone into retirement for three days, and is taken up with his devotions. It is impossible for him during these three days to give an interview to any one, or to talk, or to come out. But you can see him at the end of three days. And now be pleased to tell me the purpose of all the trouble you have given yourselves. Is it merely to make a visit to his worship, or have you some other matter, too?

*One of the Nak. peo.*—In the first place, our sole aim is to visit his worship! But secondly, each of us has brought a trifling donation to offer to him, and if he will accept it, perchance he will not be stinting to us of his favor!

*Ham.*—Well I understand. No doubt you have brought copper money, and you want to buy silver. Now, the truth of the matter is that our master, Mulla Ibrahim Khalil, will not take the money from you. The silver that came from the last melting, and also all that which is now under our hands, is already disposed of to the Armenians of Iklis, and for the double weight of silver that is to be given a single weight of copper coin has already been received by us. And still another month must pass before the completion of the elixir for this second melting. Under these circumstances, it is impossible for our master either to receive your money or to give you silver. Especially since the applicants for silver have become so numerous that the silver of each month's melting is sold a month in advance.

*One of the Nak. peo.*—Our feelings of devotion to our master, Mulla Ibrahim Khalil, have nothing to do with the fact of others being his humble servants, too! If we could only see him, his very self, all would be quite right!



*Ham.*—In that case you must have patience for three days, until the time of our master's retirement has drawn to an end. You shall be my honored guests for three days!

*The Nak. pro.*—Very well! Certainly!

(Darvish Abbas appears out of his hut. He is a man of about thirty, with long hair, yellow complexion and scanty beard. He is tall, wears the conical cap and a leopard-skin over his shoulders; he has a horn for blowing, and under his arm he holds a red-feathered fowl. Intoning in a terrific voice the words, Ya Hu, Ya Hakk! meaning "O He, Allah the Only One, O the Truth!" he marches up behind the tents and drives a tent-peg into the ground. Thrice he blows his horn, and the echoes come back from rock and hill. Then he fastens the cock to the tent-peg, and declaims in a loud voice:)

'Tis a fair day of springtide, arise! and enjoy what the day  
bringeth forth,

Rely not on days yet to dawn, or that springtide will come  
back again.

But arise now! and count as thy gain the breath of this soft  
vernal breeze,

The bright, tuneful song of the bird, the perfume so sweet  
of the flower,

In the sight of the man that is wise, who regardeth the leaf of  
the tree,

Each leaflet is truly a page proclaiming aloud the Creator.

(He blows again three blasts on the horn, then spreads the leopard-skin on the grass about ten paces from the cock, and once more chanting in a loud and terrific voice, Ya Hakk! Ya Hu! takes his seat on the skin, squatting with his knees up under his armpits. The Nakhu people have rushed out of the tent, and thunderstruck stand witnessing the strange scene. When the echoes have died away they turn to Mulla Hamid.)

*One of the Nak. pro.*—Mulla Hamid, who is the Darvish? and what is this cock?

*Ham.*—(Laughing heartily.) Ha! ha! ha! Ha! ha! ha!

Yes, yes! You have every right to ask the question, for you simple people are ignorant of the secrets of science, and unlearned in its methods. That grass there is a major ingredient in the elixir, and it is only to be found in these hills. No one besides Mulla Agha Ibrahim Khalil is capable of recognizing it. But according to the assertion of the Greek sages, it must grow while the cock is crowing. So it is the duty of Darvish Abbas each night to take the cock, and, after performing the ceremonies which you have just now witnessed, to tie the bird up in a new place, and then he must watch from sundown to dawn to keep off the jackals and foxes. Thus, while by night the cock crows, the grass for the elixir at the same time grows. In the book of "The Wonders of Wondrous Matters" it is plainly indicated that for the service of guarding the cock, only a Darvish, and men of no other condition, may lawfully be employed.

*The Nak. peo.*—Allah is great! All praise be to him!

### ACT III.

The scene is inside the tent of Mulla Ibrahim Khalil. Ibrahim is discovered kneeling on his prayer-carpet, his turban is on his head, and in his hand a chaplet of a thousand beads. He mutters his prayers. Hamid stands facing him, with his arms crossed.

*Hamid.*—Master, be pleased to give your commands. Shall I introduce the guests to your presence?

*Ibrahim.*—Well, yes; go and call them.

(Mulla Hamid makes an inclination, leaves the tent, and returns accompanied by the people of Nakhu, introducing them into Ibrahim Khalil's presence.)

*The Nakhu people.*—Peace be on you!

*Ibr.*—(Blandly smiling, slowly rocks his body from side to side while turning the beads of his chaplet.) And on you be the peace! You are welcome. You have brought joy in putting yourselves to the trouble of coming. (He moves to make room for them, and then motions them to be seated.)

*One of the Nakhu people.*—(After taking his seat.) For us to pay a visit to one so great as your worship is not trouble, but rather cause of ease and felicity to us!

*Ibr.*—(With affected humility.) My assistant, Mulla Hamid, has already assured me of your excellent dispositions. I also was extremely desirous of seeing you. But as to the matter in hand, by Heaven! I hardly know what to do, and assuredly I shall be put to shame before you! From Mulla Hamid's report I conclude that you have brought copper coin, wishing to purchase therewith silver.

*The Nak. pco.*—Yes, master, so please you that your favor may be ours!

*Ibr.*—By Allah! Alas that I should be put to shame before guests so dear to me as you are! But the buyers of silver are so numerous! And every month, giving money for the following month, they buy in advance the silver of the next melting. Why, the silver of the last melting, and this, too, that is now under our hands, has already been bought by the Armenians of Iklis. And the silver that will be produced by the elixir in the melting to be completed at the end of the month, that, too, the Jews of Vartash have got by their begging and bothering, and they are gone off, near by, to bring the copper coin. I had not yet told Mulla Hamid of it, for he is not very fond of the Jews. But I must show them some kindness, for their village is near here, and they do me many services.

*Ham.*—(Interrupting.) Master, these—

*Ibr.*—Be silent!—In short, those who desire silver have reached such a number that they give me no leisure in which to find time for the preparation of the elixir. For in order to prepare the ingredients for the elixir these must be set, for the space of twenty days, in a pot made of luting-clay, to soak in spirit of sulphur, and each day a certain fixed quantity of fresh spirit of sulphur must be introduced. Then, after this, the ingredients must remain, for ten consecutive days, in an alembic and retort, covered with roseatic acid, and every other day the roseatic acid must be changed and fresh added. After the termination of this portion of the preparation, the ingredients of the elixir must be brought to the full term of its concoction by incident of igneous heat, in a crucible made of

luting-clay. After a space of three sidereal hours, following on the admixture of certain other secret ingredients of a foreign nature, it then first presents an appearance of melting, subsequently coagulates, and finally becomes stable in the form of a soft-substanced body. Elixir gets its name because of its action on the baser ores. Thus, for instance, when brass that has been melted has a certain measured portion of elixir mixed in with it, it turns into pure silver. This is my art, but foolish men, as I am assured, have been spreading abroad on all hands that I work miracles and have received a revelation. I am no such person. I am but a simple man, who seeks for the companionship of the pious, and strives for the doing of good deeds, firstly through the grace of the Almighty Creator, and secondly by means of researches and profound investigations which I have made in the science of alchemy. Through the experiments which now for some time I have been conducting in the philosophical sciences, and while searching out the secrets of the natural world, I have become acquainted with the full particulars of the preparation of the elixir, and how with prudence it may be concocted. At every degree of its preparation there are a number of essential external conditions to be fulfilled. These are all exigencies necessarily attributive to the elixir, though at first sight they may appear to common men as strange and peculiar. Also . . . .

*Ham.*—Master! As I have already begged you to understand, these before you are all Moslems, and, if it please you, you should give them some advantage over the accursed Jews—

*Ibr.*—(rising slightly.) No! Not so! I have given my word, and for two million pieces I would not recall what I have spoken. But see! An idea comes to my mind. Only first tell me that I may rightly calculate. The elixir for this month's melting, when it is completed, how many pounds of brass will it suffice to convert into silver?

*Ham.*—(Fixing his eyes on the ceiling of the tent, presses the forefinger of his right hand on his chin, and thinks.) Elixir will be prepared sufficing for 800 pounds of silver. Thus, after its completion in thirty days, it will be projected over 800 pounds of brass and turn these into pure silver, such

as will pass the touchstone. Now, allowing that your worship deducts one-sixteenth of this by reason of the impurity of the brass, still at the beginning of next month 750 pounds of silver will be produced, as I deduce from my inspection of the amount of the crude brass and of the elixir.

*Ibr.*—And these worshipful gentlemen, how much copper money have they brought?

*One of the Nak. peco.*—Five thousand pounds-weight, master.

*Ibr.*—Very well! See, Mulla Hamid, what I have in my mind. The copper money of these worshipful people is but little in amount, and we will allow them 250 pounds of silver. Then there will remain 500 pounds, and that can be given to the Jews, that my promise to them may not be broken. What think you of it? Have I not made an excellent partition? On the one hand, your mediation regarding the rights of our co-religionists has not been for naught, and, on the other hand, my promise given has not been forfeited.

*The Nak. peco.*—(Bowing.) May Heaven increase your prosperity! So please you, we will deposit the money here in your presence.

*Ibr.*—(Raising his eyebrows and speaking slowly.) It is not necessary to deposit the money with me, and how should I find time enough and have leisure to attend to such trifles! Count it and give it over to Mulla Hamid, and then in thirty days come back here and get your 250 pounds of virgin silver. God be with you! The hour of mid-day prayer is come!

*The Nak. peco.*—(Bowing.) May Heaven increase your life and your prosperity. (Exit from the tent.)

#### ACT IV.

The scene is the same. The thirty days have elapsed. At early dawn the people of Nakhu are seen approaching. Mulla Ibrahim Khalil hastily ties a white cloth round his waist and turns up his sleeves. He is dressed in his working clothes, and his head is covered with a cotton night-cap. He comes outside and calls to his assistant.

*Ibrahim.*—Mulla Hamid, be quick, and go and get in the

tent the goldsmith forge, with the crucible and the small bellows, and bring them out here. Set them up here in this place, and see to arrange the nozzle of the bellows in its proper position. Then light the forge and set in the crucible. Bring the sack of coals from behind the tent and turn them out in front of the forge.

Now go to the tent, in the casket there are three small colored phials, and, twisted up, three colored papers; get them and bring them here.

Now untwist the yellow paper,—open it, and empty the contents of it into the crucible.

Now pour the liquid out of the green phial over it, and now sit down and blow the bellows.

(After these orders have been carried out, Mulla Ibrahim Khalil takes up a pair of iron tongs and fixes the crucible firmly. At this moment appear the heads of the Nakh people from behind the corner of the tent, they having already dismounted from their horses. Ibrahim is occupied with his work, and he is looking into the crucible. They are delighted at discovering Ibrahim thus occupied.)

*The Nakh people.*—Peace be on you!

*Ibr.*—(Looking up.) Peace be on you! Oh but why have you come to-day? How is this? and what have you done! What a disaster it is you bring down on my head! I was busy working for your good; but you are come to render abortive all the pains that I have taken for your sakes! Oh! Alas! Alas! Alas!

*The Nak. peo.*—(In astonishment.) But, master, what has happened? What disaster has come on our heads? What is it that we have done?

*Ibr.*—(In despair.) Why, what would you have worse than this? You set foot here in this place to-day at the very hour of the projection of the elixir! At the very moment when the ingredients are melting in the crucible! Why, it is the especial property of the elixir that for a whole league round the tent where it is liquidescing no strange man must set foot, or else the elixir loses its peculiar power and becomes a mere gas. On this subject the Magician of the Sprites, Sakkaki,

has most carefully insisted. Do you imagine that otherwise I should, of my own accord, have come and taken up my abode here in a corner by myself, thus far away from all habitations?

*The Nak. pco.*—(Astonished.) But, master, we have come in accordance with your own commands. To-day the thirty days are completed.

*Ibr.*—What I said to you was, "At the end of thirty days," meaning, of course, for you to let thirty days elapse, and to come on the thirty-first. The elixir would then have been prepared, and the silver already run out. But you come on the thirtieth day, at the very moment when the elixir is at fluxion in the crucible! Oh! Alas! Alas!

*The Nak. pco.*—Well, but as it is all happened, we don't know what to do. Can't we help it?

*Ibr.*—Why, there is no help for it. The elixir will not now do its office, and the silver will not be transmuted. Unless, indeed, you . . . For the counter-spell is possible only with this.

*The Nak. pco.*—Unless we do what? What is it makes the counter-spell possible?

*Ibr.*—Well, now that you have once come, the alchemistic rule forbids that you should leave the place in which the elixir in the crucible is at fluxion. That is, if you would have any regard for your own welfare, and wish not to render abortive all the pains that I have undergone on your behalf. But from now until the time when the elixir is complete and pours out of the crucible—and I have already been occupied over it for the last hour, and it still requires two hours more to come to term—for this time you must not allow the idea of a monkey to cross your mind, nor must you let the semblance of its image come into your thoughts. The counter-spell depends on this! And otherwise this elixir, which for the whole of the last month I have been working to prepare, in the twinkling of an eye becomes naught, and goes off into thin air. This is its peculiar property, even as Hakim Jull has very carefully described, times over, and plainly laid down in his treatise.

*The Nak. pco.*—All right, master! This is a simple matter.

Please Heaven to make the perfecting of the elixir dependent on this alone!

*Ibr.*—Yes, it depends simply on this. May Allah be satisfied with what you do, and I shall be so likewise. Mulla Hamid, blow with the bellows.

(Hamid blows the bellows, while Ibrahim turns the crucible round with the iron tongs. He throws one of the ingredient powders into it, and pours in, drop by drop, the contents of one of the phials. Then he takes his seat, and, pulling out his watch, looks at it. All of a sudden—)

*Zaman.*—(Turning toward him.) Master, is there not some other counter-spell than this?

*Ibr.*—No other but what?

*Zam.*—No other but with the monkey.

*Ibr.*—You fool! What—what are you saying? What words are you pronouncing? Ah, woe to you!

*Zam.*—Well, but what can I do? I can't drive the monkey out of my thoughts.

*Ibr.*—(Very angrily.) Hold your tongue, you fellow! Whatever comes into your mind, keep it out!

*Zam.*—On my eyes be it, master.

*Ibr.*—(Angrily, to his assistant.) Blow hard with the bellows! You are going to sleep! (Poking down his head, he peers into the crucible. Then undoing the blue paper he pours in the powder.)

*Salman.*—(Throwing off his cap.) Ouf! how hot it is! Ouf! Heaven give you all its curse! They will not keep back! There is no help for it!

*Ibr.*—And whom should Heaven curse? Who will not keep back? What is there no help for? What are you talking about?

*Salman.*—There is no help for it! The counter-spell is impossible!

*The rest of the Nakhu people.*—That is true. There is no help for it. It will never be possible!

*Ibr.*—(Getting in a rage.) What do you mean by there



being no help for it? What is impossible? What are you talking about? What has come to you?

*Salm.*—Master, all the animals of the hills have changed themselves into the figures of monkeys and the likenesses of huge apes, and are uncurling their long tails before my eyes, and now are assaulting my head. Ouf! I don't know what to do, or whither to take refuge! Ouf! Heaven give you its malediction, you apes and monkeys!

*The rest of the Nak. peo.*—(Throwing up their heads.) Malediction on you, you monkeys! What a pass is this we have got into!

(While the people of Nakhu are not looking, Ibrahim hurriedly throws something into the crucible. Flames and a shower of bullets burst out of it and fly about on all sides. Then the crucible cracks, and the elixir blows up like gunpowder. The fire is upset, and various articles begin to blaze.—Hamid springs back behind the bellows in terror.)

*Ibr.*—(Screaming at the Nakhu people.) Heaven ruin your homes! What is this that you have done! Heaven ruin your homes, and close the doors of your houses on you! (He plucks his beard and strikes his knees.)

*The Nak. peo.*—Sit down, master! Be calm! What was decreed has come to pass. There is no help for it. But now what ought we to do?

*Ibr.*—(In great vexation.) What ought you to do? Why, what you must do is, now before the sun sets, to get yourselves to that village, near by there, and remain quiet for all the time that the next elixir is in preparation. You can come back here again after the thirty-one days have elapsed. You may then receive the silver that is yours in exchange for what still remains of the five thousand pounds-weight of your copper coin. That is, the remainder after deduction of the sum of necessity spent on the indispensable reagents used at the last fusion, and entirely wasted. But understand,—before getting notice from me, on no account do you stir out a step! For, may be, you will again make an error in your counting and arrive most inopportunately one day before the completion of the elixir, and so spoil the next as you have done this. An idea

comes to me. I will add the interest on your money, during this time, to the amount of the silver that shall be set aside for you. For it makes no difference to me to give you a little more or less silver, but for people like you every grain of silver is, after all, something. So God be with you! Go your ways and wait for my summons. (He retires to his tent, his head bent down, and says, aside:) Yes, wait till I send you a summons! But, please Heaven, before that time comes I shall find means of dispensing with seeing your faces again!

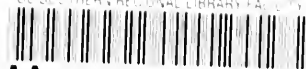








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